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THE INDEPENDENT

Friday 5 June 1998 45p (IR 50p) No 3,629

Labour MPs revolt against the party line

By Anthony Bevins,
Colin Brown and
Fran Abrams

LABOUR fear and loathing of the Government machine broke out yesterday after the whips went too far in the drive to control MPs.

Senior backbenchers are enraged by a plan to take central control of candidate selection for the next election, threatening to oust non-conformists from their Commons seats.

The backlash has even spread to the ranks of the Cabinet, with Deputy Prime minister John Prescott and Secretary of State for Education and Employment David Blunkett reportedly opposing the whips' plans to dictate the names of the three MPs who are to be elected to the party's ruling national executive committee (NEC).

Unhappy and fearful Labour MPs - who all demanded anonymity before speaking to *The Independent* - yesterday compared the whips to the East German secret police, the Stasi.

In Prime Minister's Commons question time on Wednesday night, Andrew Macklin, Labour MP for Thurrock, delighted all sides of the House with a brave question in which he urged Tony Blair to discourage fawning and obsequious questions, and encourage scrutiny and accountability of his executive by MPs.

The Prime Minister's answer was ambiguous. But there has been no ambiguity in the whips' proposals.

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Why I had to fight back
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The plan even included a suggestion that MPs in first-Labour seats might be challenged by "chicken run" Commons colleagues who could lose their more marginal constituencies at the next election.

One senior MP said yesterday: "You see eyes of the young ones who got in by not many votes - their eyes lit up at the prospect of challenging all the old farts, and beating them."

Another long-standing MP said: "They are trying to get a permanent change in the kind of person we select as MPs. They want people who shout,

"What's the line? What's the line?" all the time."

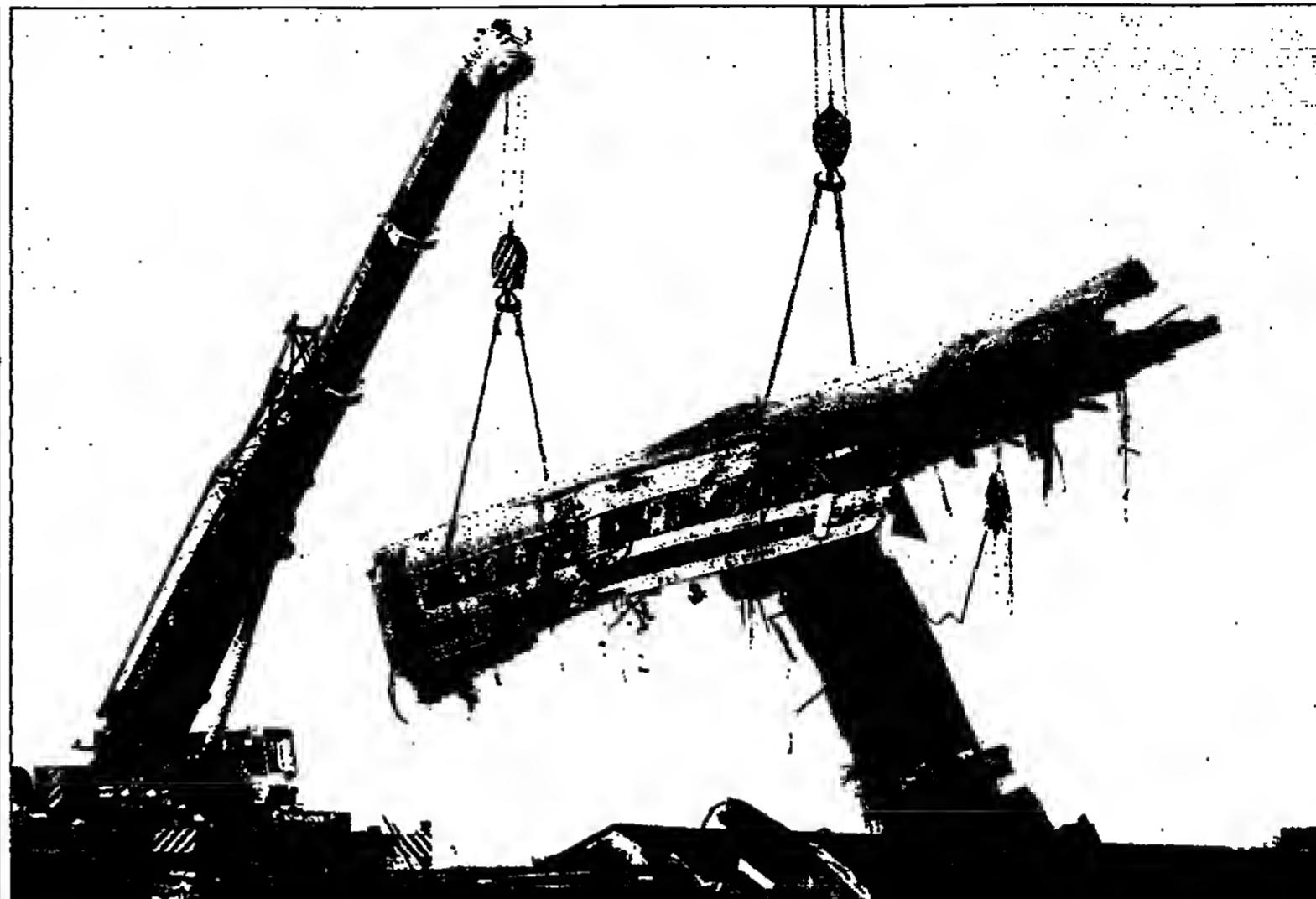
At Wednesday's PLP meeting, David Gardner, the party's assistant general secretary, said there was no central plan to fill the Labour benches with a bunch of Blairie clones. But few older MPs are convinced.

The revolt against plans to control membership of the NEC came on two fronts yesterday: with strong signals of cabinet-level backing for Dennis Skinner to remain a parliamentary member of the NEC; and with left-wingers leading the running in constituency party nominations for the rank-and-file section.

Mr Prescott and Mr Blunkett were said to have been upset by the tactics of the Government whips' office to rig the election on the NEC for MPs and MEPs by issuing its own preferred list of three candidates, including Clive Soley, chairman of the PLP.

Mr Skinner, MP for Bolsover, had gained more than 50 nominations yesterday within 24 hours of deciding to stand again for the NEC. Pete Willsman, a well-known figure on the left of the party, had the backing of 27 constituencies, and Liz Davies, 25. Michael Cashman, received 21 nominations.

Last night some party sources said leadership interference had backfired. "The leadership has been cack-handed over this," one senior party figure said. "If they had left it to the grass roots to decide, their candidates would have come through."



A crane yesterday lifts one of the carriages from the ICE train which crashed in Germany on Wednesday, killing almost 100 people

Germany halts all high-speed trains

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

GERMAN federal rail officials

last night announced they were taking out of service its first-generation high-speed trains for inspection as a precaution after a deadly train crash in northern Germany.

A spokesman said all 60 Inter City Express trains were being pulled immediately. The train that careened out of control on Wednesday morning in the northern German town of

Eschede was part of the fleet of first-generation ICE trains that began operation in 1991.

Officials are still at a loss to explain what caused the train to crash, derailing and slamming into a concrete overpass, killing at least 100 people.

However, it emerged yesterday that some of the carriages on the train came off the track and were dragged for miles before ploughing into the road bridge.

Regional government officials confirmed federal railway experts had found evidence that one of the coaches slipped off the track four miles before the train reached the bridge.

It appears the carriage was dragged along the rail bed until the train went over points shortly before the road crossing at Eschede. The wheels then jumped the track and uncoupled the car from the train.

This might explain why the engine cab found itself free of its passenger load - and how the driver escaped unscathed from the crash.

Industry observers pointed out that survivors of the crash remembered hearing a jolt minutes before the carriages crumpled in the ensuing impact.

"These trains travel at hundreds of miles an hour, so you cover miles in minutes. The noise people apparently heard could have been wheels coming off the track," said Mel Holley, deputy editor of Rail magazine.

The theory the Inter City Express (ICE) jumped off the tracks after hitting a car, which had crashed through the railings

on the bridge and plunged into the path of the high-speed service has already been discounted. This is in part because of the ICE's safety system can detect objects on the track and brake as necessary.

In a burst of national pride *Le Parisien*, the French capital's daily, said because the bogies under the carriages on France's TGV train were articulated "like a snake's vertebrae" they would not be crushed like those of a German express train.

Eschede desolation, page 15

Interest rate rise stuns business

By Diane Coyle
and Colin Brown

MILLIONS of home buyers face the threat of higher mortgage costs after the Bank of England raised interest rates yesterday in a move which outraged industry and caught the City by surprise.

None of the big mortgage lenders increased their loan rates immediately. Stiff competition in the mortgage market meant all were waiting for somebody else to make the first move.

However, costs could yet rise for borrowers who take out variable rather than fixed rate mortgages. An increase of 0.25 per cent would add about £8 a month to the cost of a typical £50,000 repayment mortgage.



Gordon Brown has set the tone on interest rates

The decision by the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee to increase rates by a quarter point to 7.5 per cent was the sixth such move since the election. It stunned the City, unions and businesses, and was greeted with a chorus of condemnation, although the Treasury hinted at its approval.

"This reinforces the consistent message the Chancellor has made in recent months that everyone must show greater responsibility in pay," said a Treasury source.

The Bank of England which has set interest rates since last May showed it was not afraid to take unpopular decisions, and after the Prime Minister's warning that private sector pay rises were too high, Downing Street said the move was absolutely right. Everything must be done to end the cycle of boom and bust, said the Prime Minister's spokesman. But the Tories were quick to exploit the rise. Tory central office paged Tory MPs

at lunchtime with the message that the rise in interest rates "is another blow to householders". Francis Maude, the shadow Chancellor, blamed the Chancellor for the "hammer blow" to homeowners and businesses. He said it was a "direct result of the Government's inability to control inflation" and threatened to put more people out of work.

John Redwood, the Tory Trade and Industry spokesman, warned that interest rates may have to rise further to squeeze inflation out of the economy. "Wages are very buoyant - that is why the Bank was forced to act but we would not have started from here. We would be encouraging savings, not taxing them like the Chancellor."

The Liberal Democrats said

the Bank of England was forced into action because of Gordon Brown's unwillingness to turn the screw on consumers. "Gordon Brown's botched budgets have helped created a Jekyll and Hyde economy - a 'booming' consumer sector and 'busting' manufacturing," said Edward Davey, the Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman.

The Confederation of British Industry said it was "very concerned", and the Engineering Employers' Federation described its members as "terrified". Exporters blame the strong pound, which has hammered their profits and order books, on high interest rates. Union leaders were equally appalled. Ken Jackson, of the AEEU, warned that 200,000 jobs were under threat

in manufacturing. Banks and building societies said the surprise blow would not help the housing market, coming as it did on top of the recent reduction in tax relief on mortgage interest payments.

Savers started to benefit yesterday, however. Bradford & Bingley, raised the rates it pays on savings accounts and pledged to hold home loan rates unchanged until 1 August.

Signs the economy is slowing to a more sustainable rate of growth had persuaded the financial markets that the cost of borrowing had already reached its peak and would soon start to fall. But the Bank's statement warned that the uncertain economic outlook kept monetary policy "finely balanced".

Business shock, page 22

Barry takes the Sky shilling. And why not?

By Janine Gibson
Media Correspondent

AFTER 26 years as the voice of film on the BBC, Barry Norman will utter his last "...and why not?" for the corporation later this month before he defects to Rupert Murdoch's Sky TV.

Mr Norman's *Film 98* will end this summer and he will front Sky's movie programming from September.

The BBC does not expect *Film 98* to return in the autumn and has dusted down its casting couch to find a presenter for a

new film review show. Names understood to be in the frame include Channel 5 news anchor Kirsty Young, *Big Breakfast* and *Moiviewatch* host Johnny Vaughan and comedians Dawn French and Mark Lamarr.

BBC insiders suggested yesterday that though his sudden announcement was a surprise, the 64-year-old presenter had been aware that *Film 98* was unlikely to survive past *Film 99*, let alone reach *Film 2000*.

A source said: "It is time for a change. The feeling is that the show will have to be revamped."

BBC1 controller Peter Salmon said yesterday: "Films are of great interest, particularly to the young, and it is important for us to find popular TV's new face of film who will appeal to them and take us into the new millennium."

The front man of film since he took over *Film 72* eight months after the programme's launch, Mr Norman said: "I will look back on my time at the BBC with huge affection, but the opportunities offered by Sky proved too attractive to turn down."

Cut! Film '98 Sky banner John Whitley

In brief

Grave secret

The motive for the murder of Billie-Jo Jenkins may be a secret she took "to her grave", a court was told.

Page 5

Diana's death

Almost all the witnesses of the accident that killed Diana, Princess of Wales, will gather in one room today.

Page 11

Teenage grants

Child benefit for 16- to 19-year-olds should replace with £40-a-week grants for sixth formers, MPs said.

Page 7

Afghan earthquake

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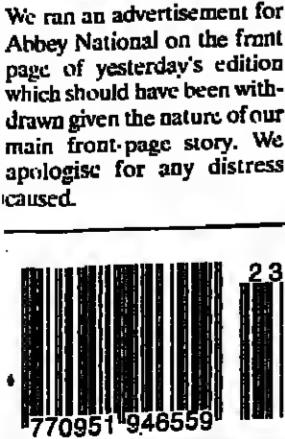
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Foster father's frustrating day 'led to murder'

A DEPUTY headteacher "savagely" beat his teenage foster daughter to death after a day of "frustrating and irritating" events, a court was told yesterday.

Sion Jenkins, 40, bludgeoned 13-year-old Billie-Jo Jenkins to death with an 18-inch metal tent spike on the patio of the family home in Hastings, East Sussex, a jury at Lewes Crown Court heard.

Two of his natural daughters, aged 10 and 12, were outside the family house as Jenkins bludgeoned Billie-Jo and then left the house with his foster daughter dying in a pool of blood.

Mr Jenkins denies murdering Billie-Jo on 15 February last year. But, said Camden Pratt, prosecuting, forensic evidence proved that the teacher had to have been with Billie-Jo when she was beaten.

Mr Pratt said: "There were no witnesses to her death. They (the scientists) will say that when the defendant's clothing was examined, upon it were spatterings of blood. When they were tested with DNA tests they turned out to be the blood of Billie-Jo. The pattern of spatterings is consistent with the defendant having stood very close to Billie-Jo when she was being struck. It is not consistent with his attending to a dead, blood-stained body."

Mr Pratt added: "The defendant denies being present when she was struck. In view of that blood patterning the Crown says he must have been lying and the only reason he would be lying would be because he was the one who inflicted those fatal blows that led to the spattering of blood on his clothing."

Billie-Jo had been fostered by Mr Jenkins and his wife Lois, 39, for more than four years.

The family had recently moved from London to Hastings, with Billie-Jo and their four natural daughters where Mr Jenkins had taken up the post of deputy headteacher of William Parker Boys School.

Mr Pratt told the court how on the day of the murder Mr Jenkins had spent much of the day making frustrating journeys picking up his children.

At midday, he had to drive to a supermarket to take a cheque book to his wife. When he arrived he realised he had brought the wrong book and had to make another round trip.

At 2pm, his 10-year-old daughter Lottie was taken to a music lesson by a family friend. But Mr Jenkins and his wife had to follow in their car because he did not know where to pick his daughter up from.

"When they arrived home Billie-Jo had been dead for no more than 15 minutes so the scene that was to meet them was horrific," said Mr Pratt.

Instead of rushing to help his foster daughter, Mr Jenkins took the girls into the playroom next door and shut the door to the dining room where Billie-Jo lay.

Mr Pratt said: "The Crown say that the defendant didn't go to help. The Crown would suggest that that is because he knew that Billie-Jo was beyond help because it was he that had killed her."

Mr Jenkins rang for an ambulance and telephoned family friend Denise Franklin and asked her to come to the house. He told the operator that Billie-Jo had been injured between 30 and 45 minutes earlier.

Mr Pratt said: "That was a great exaggeration. The longer the time he could give the easier it would be to suggest that a complete stranger for no reason at all had walked in off the street, perpetrated a murder with no motive, having arrived without a murder weapon and left without stealing anything or doing anything, not seen by anyone."

The jury was told the blows suffered by Billie-Jo had been so ferocious that they shattered the left side of her skull. The trial was adjourned until today.

Billie-Jo was still painting

When he went to pick up Lottie, accompanied by his 12-year-old daughter Annie, at around 3pm he had to take another 10-year-old girl home.

On returning home, Mr Jenkins is alleged to have murdered his foster daughter while his children were outside.

Billie-Jo had been left painting the dining room patio doors.

Mr Pratt said: "The defendant says that at one point he had to tell off Billie-Jo for painting the inside of the doors rather than the outside – perhaps another frustration that she wasn't doing what he wanted."

The trial was adjourned until today.



England footballer David Beckham sports the official team shirt

Photograph: Neal Simpson

England players' sunburn risk despite shirts

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

ENGLAND'S world cup football squad face a threat from an unexpected quarter when they line up for their opening match in Marseille next week. Glenn Hoddle's advisers appear to have neglected a crucial difference between Wembley and southern France – the Mediterranean sun.

Three doctors who tested a T-shirt made of identical material to that used for the England team's kit found it offered little protection against ultraviolet radiation. In the strong sun normal for France in June and July they warn that the players are at risk of sunburn.

Dr Andrew Wright and colleagues from St Luke's Hospital in Bradford shone ultraviolet rays through a layer of the material used in the shirt. They found the loose weave of the shirt allowed 10 to 20 per cent of the radiation through.

Over a three-hour period, a fair-skinned person wearing the shirt would be at greater risk of contracting a sunburn on the back and shoulders than one who discarded the shirt and applied sunblock of factor 20-30 instead, they say.

The investigators, who report their findings in a letter to *The Lancet*, suggest that moisture from humidity or sweat can reduce the sun protection further.

Umbro marketing director Peter Draper said: "This is essentially the same kit used by Brazil when they won the World Cup in Los Angeles in mid-July, 1994. It didn't affect them adversely in any way."

The hearing was adjourned until Monday.

Lloyds Bank Base Rate.

Lloyds Bank Plc has increased its Base Rate to 7.50 per cent from 7.25 per cent p.a. with effect from Thursday 4th June 1998.

The change in Base Rate will also be applied from the same date by Lloyds Private Banking Limited.



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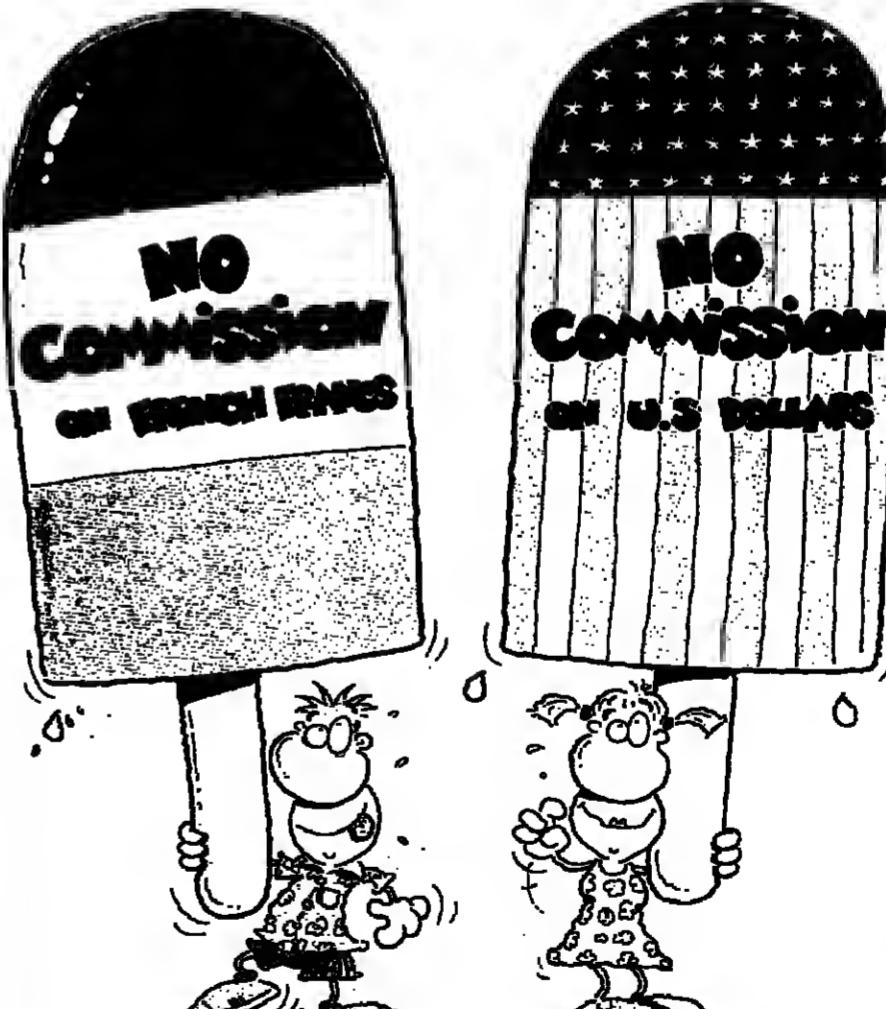
Base Rate

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Lawrence murder review 'flawed'

A POLICE officer yesterday admitted there were "inaccuracies and omissions" in an internal review he carried out into the police inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence which was later judged to be crucial in hampering subsequent inquiries.

Detective Chief Superintendent Roderick Barker concluded in his 1993 report that the inquiry was being conducted professionally and all lines of inquiry had been pursued. But yesterday he told the public inquiry into the black 18-year-old's murder in Eltham, south London, in April 1993, that he had seen mistakes at the time but had not included them for fears that they could be seized upon by defence lawyers acting in a future prosecution. He denied suggestions that his review was a cover-up to protect officers.

His review was criticised by a Police Complaints Authority report by Kent Police last year which said it did not identify errors in the investigation and, as a result, later attempts to solve the crime were misinformed.

Mr Barker, who has now retired from the force, was appointed to conduct the internal review, routinely carried out when murders have not been solved after 10 weeks, four months after the murder.

At the outset he discussed the matter with Commander Hugh Blenkin, who was in charge of operational matters in Eltham in 1993. In his statement to the public inquiry he said that Mr Blenkin had told him that the review should be carried out sensitively and should not criticise any officers, particularly Detective Superintendent Brian Weeden, who was then the senior investigating officer.

Mr Barker said: "It was intended to be a constructive exercise to identify and assist the investigation in moving forward. The sole objective was to identify and bring to justice the people who murdered Stephen Lawrence."

The hearing was adjourned until Monday.

Pensions poverty faced by millions

By Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

MILLIONS of people could face a drop of up to 30 per cent in their income after they retire unless pensions provision is improved, the Government was warned yesterday in an independent report.

The report provided more ammunition for the Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman, who has been at the centre of a battle with the Treasury over a Green Paper setting out the Government's long-term plans for "stakeholder" pensions to top up the existing state pension.

Launching the report, by a committee chaired by pensions consultant Tom Ross, Ms Harman denied the Treasury had forced the Green Paper to be delayed and insisted that it would be published before the end of the year.

"The report sounds a clear warning that many people now working, perhaps in their thirties or forties, face a big drop in their income when they come to retire," she said. "On average, people can expect their incomes to fall by between 20 and 30 per cent in retirement."

This report shows that more people will face a bigger drop in their income when they retire - a drop they certainly don't expect to face and one which is avoidable."

Ms Harman will also use the report's findings to reject demands by pensioners' campaigners for the state pension to be linked in future to rises in earnings, as well as prices. It found that it would lead to some elderly people living alone losing income support.

But the report endorses the main thrust of Government policy to top up the state pension with "stakeholder" pensions to

Compulsory pensions, page 26



Harriet Harman warned of a big cut in income when people retired. Photograph: Brian Harris

SKETCH

Arrogant Jack in the land of milk and honey

By Michael Brown

sheep meat regulations, beef cull and so on.

Yesterday, the terminology frankly overwhelmed my powers of concentration. I started with a jolt when Don Touhig (Labour, Elvaston) quizzed Jeff Rooker about something called the "cattle traceability scheme". Thinking this was some novel way to catch Daisy or Buttercup if they escaped down the lane, it turns out that this is some complicated paraphernalia to do with bovine spongiform encephalopathy and the beef ban.

The air was thick with technicalities. Nigel Board (Labour, Bexleyheath and Crayford) was concerned about the Varroa Jacobson mite which is killing all our bees. He was reassured that in this Blairite land of milk and honey there is a "viable UK honey programme".

Michael Jack and junior minister Elliot Morley got in a convoluted exchange about agri-monetary compensation while Geoffrey Clifton-Brown (Conservative, Cotswold) was in a strop about vitamin B6. I could not tell whether this was good for you or not.

Gordon Prentice (Labour, Pendle) was concerned about low-level antibiotics as a prophylactic and predicted biological Armageddon.

Few members attend agriculture questions time except those who want a comfortable favourite ringside seat - Dennis Skinner (Labour, Bolsover) and Edward Leigh (Conservative, Gainsborough); those who wanted to rest their eyes - Peter Pike (Labour, Burnley); and those unfortunate to have signed a question form two weeks earlier in the members' tea room when it was thrust under their nose by an energetic whip.

There is only one rule in agriculture, questions: any member need to remember farmers are always grumbling. Never believe them. Ministers' heads are always on the block in the eyes of the National Farmers' Union. They complained throughout the Tory rule; they will complain throughout Labour's rule.

Thus it was, as oow, and shall be ever more.

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هذا من الأصل



Soldiers practising firefighting techniques at Wattisham barracks in Suffolk yesterday, in preparation for next week's planned strike by Essex fire teams

Photograph: Brian Harris

Soldiers haul out Green Goddess hoses for firefighters' strike

THE old girls are not quite as fleet of foot as they used to be. If truth be told, they were always a touch ungainly and built for comfort rather than speed, writes Barrie Clement.

But next week the Green

Goddess fire engines, despite their inadequacies, will be careering around Essex at 40mph in place of the county's striking firefighters.

Yesterday, soldiers of the Royal Scots and Royal Logis-

tical Corps were training on the 24-hour walk-out next Friday, when Essex Fire Brigades Union members will demonstrate their anger over £1m worth of cuts in a march through Colchester.

A four-hour stoppage starting at 10am on Monday is ex-

pected to be followed by a

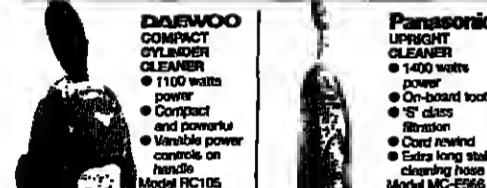
ing on the Green Goddesses yesterday at Wattisham military airfield in Suffolk have never been near a fire appliance before. Some will be attending emergency calls with just one day's training.

Some of the soldiers train-

Andy Gilchrist, an official of the firefighters' union, said that the soldiers' equipment was "totally inadequate". He said: "The soldiers have my sympathy and so does the public."

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State subsidy boosts private toll road

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

BRITAIN'S first private toll road will benefit from a £20m subsidy on a nearly link road despite promises that it would not cost taxpayers a penny.

The Birmingham Northern Relief Road (BNRR) will run for 27 miles and link the southern and northern ends of the M6. Its supporters say it will reduce congestion on the motorways around Birmingham, but environmentalists believe the BNRR will generate rather than reduce traffic.

The government subsidy for the reconstruction of the existing M42 near Water Orton to enable its use by BNRR traffic was revealed in a parliamentary answer by the transport minister Glenda Jackson to the Labour MP Tony Wright.

However, environmentalists claim that, while in opposition, Labour said the BNRR would not be built.

"The Government has mis-

led people into believing this was an entirely privately funded project," said Gerald Kells, of Friends of the Earth. "Labour, who promised in opposition never to build the road, have this hidden subsidy."

Labour's own roads review document lists the BNRR as a "private" project, and the Highway Agency told a public inquiry that it fitted with Government policy of "harnessing private finance to bring forward badly needed infrastructure".

Ministers gave the go-ahead for the £370m BNRR last July. Campaigners suspect that John Prescott, the Secretary of State for Transport, approved the road partly because of a penalty - said to be greater than £30m - that was payable to the private consortium building the dual three-lane motorway if it was cancelled.

The details of the commercial agreement could be revealed if a judge allows the concession to be made public later this year.

"The Government has mis-



Catherine Southon of Sotheby's auctioneers, in London, examining spun glass eyes from a collection of 2,000 orbs which are to be included in a sale of scientific and medical instruments in October

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Police face no action over death of asylum seeker

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

TWO police officers will not be prosecuted over the unlawful killing of a Nigerian asylum seeker, the Crown Prosecution Service said yesterday following a fresh review of the case.

The decision not to charge anyone for the death of Shijil Lapite, 34, who died in north London in December 1994, was immediately condemned as "incomprehensible" by the lawyer representing the dead man's family.

The CPS was forced to reconsider its original decision not to prosecute any police officers following a court challenge. But in a statement the CPS said yesterday that there was still insufficient evidence.

In January 1996, an inquest ruled that Mr Lapite was killed unlawfully after one constable admitted kicking him in the head.

Mr Lapite was arrested in Stoke Newington on suspicion of being in possession of crack cocaine. After Mr Lapite was searched and no drugs were found he ran off. Officers caught up with him and a struggle began, with Mr Lapite being put in a neckhold.

Mr Lapite later collapsed in a police van and was driven straight to hospital, where he was pronounced dead from asphyxiation.

The inquest jury heard that one pathologist had counted 45 separate injuries on the dead man's body.

A statement by the CPS said yesterday: "After painstaking consideration the Chief Crown Prosecutor for Central Casework has decided there is insufficient evidence to prosecute any police officer in connection with the death of Mr Lapite.

"In the absence of evidence to show that the actions of the police officers, either singly or in concert, were a substantial cause of Mr Lapite's death, there is not a realistic prospect of conviction against any police

officer for manslaughter." The statement also ruled out other charges relating to injuries sustained by Mr Lapite.

It added that five pathologists involved in the case were consulted again.

"None of them was able to state, without reservation, that compression of the neck was a substantial cause of Mr Lapite's death or that any other act of a police officer caused his death," the statement said.

But Raju Bhatt, the solicitor for Mr Lapite's family, argued:

"There was no doubt in the jury's mind that this man had died as a result of an unlawful and dangerous neckhold."

"It's inconceivable that any fair examination could have come to any other conclusion than to prosecute."

It is thought that members of the Lapite family will ask for a judicial review of yesterday's decision. They could also attempt to privately prosecute the officers involved.

The Police Complaints Authority said it would now reconsider whether disciplinary action should be taken against any officers.

The case of Mr Lapite was one of three deaths in custody to be re-considered following a successful court challenges last July in which the CPS admitted making mistakes.

It led to the accusation that the Director of Public Prosecutions, Dame Barbara Mills, and her prosecutors were unwilling to take the police to court.

Following the reviews three Metropolitan Police officers were charged in February with the manslaughter of Richard O'Brien, 37, who died after being arrested in Walworth, south London, in April 1994.

At the same time, the CPS decided not to prosecute anyone over the treatment of John Treadaway, a robbery suspect who claimed he was tortured by West Midlands police officers.

An inquiry into the quality of decision-making by the CPS in such cases has been set up.

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Witnesses to Diana's death meet in Paris

By John Lichfield
in Paris

FOR the first time since the accident which killed Diana, Princess of Wales, almost all of the event's living participants and witnesses will gather in one room today.

The judge leading the official investigation into the crash has called a "general confrontation" of witnesses and suspects - an event eerily reminiscent of the last chapter of an Agatha Christie novel. The only notable absentee will be the sole survivor of the crash, the bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones, who has declined to attend.

The participants, behind closed doors in a court-room in the Palais de Justice in Paris, will include Mohamed Al Fayed, father of Diana's companion, Dodi Al Fayed, who also died in the crash. They will also include the nine press photographers, and one press despatch rider, placed under formal examination for their role in the accident.

When first announced two months ago, it seemed the "confrontation" - a common device in French judicial inquiries - would mark the beginning of the end of the nine-months' investigation. According to leaks from the inquiry, this may not now be the case.

Intemperate technical investigations of the wreckage of the Mercedes are not yet complete; they may not be ready until October, 14 months after the accident. By bringing all the principal-participants together - press photographers, police, a dozen eye-witnesses - Judge Hervé Stephan hopes to close some of the gaping holes which persist in his re-creation of the events of the night of 30-31 August last year.

How close were the pursuing press motorbikes when the Mercedes carrying Diana's party crashed into the 13th pillar of the underpass? What was actually seen of the white Fiat Uno suspected of having been in a glancing collision with the Mercedes before the accident? How callously did the photographers behave in the minutes after the crash (at least three are known to have taken pictures of the dead and dying victims)?

The hearing is not a trial: it will not point the finger of blame. It will force the witnesses and suspects to test their often conflicting accounts, one against the other, face to face. It will not consider the dozens of conspiracy theories about the crash, propagated amongst others, by Mr Fayed, British tabloids, French scandal magazines, the Internet and Colonel Gaddafi.

Officially, no information

about the investigation can be revealed or published. But sources close to the inquiry have always insisted that they have discovered no scrap of evidence which suggests that the crash was anything but an accident.

Judicial sources in Paris declined to comment yesterday on the latest revelations by an ITV documentary, and in the *Spectator* magazine, about the driver of the Mercedes, Henri Paul. Both said that tests on Mr Paul's body after the crash revealed that he was driving with an abnormally high level of monoxide poisoning in his blood, as well as mind-calming drugs and three times the legal limit of alcohol.

Despite the length and intensity of the investigation, it appears that Judge Stephan is not



Mohamed Al Fayed (top),
and Judge Hervé Stephan,
who leads the investigation

yet able to say precisely why the Mercedes limousine spun out of control soon after midnight on Sunday 31 August. But the facts which have been established mean that a supreme act of will is necessary to sustain a theory of conspiracy, plot and assassination.

It would have been impossible for any would-be assassin or assassins (leaving aside all question of motive) to know the movements of Diana's party that night: their plans were constantly changing and the final route of the Mercedes was decided by Dodi and Mr Paul minutes before the crash. In any case, Diana would probably be alive today if she had worn her seatbelt.

A recent survey showed an 11 per cent increase in road deaths in Paris last year. The survey showed that the most lethal time to drive in Paris is late on Saturday night and in the early hours of Sunday morning.

The most lethal places to drive are the Boulevard Périmétrique and the fast roads beside the quays of the Seine. The most common contributing causes for fatal accidents were drink, speed and failure to fasten seatbelts.

The accident in the tunnel below the Place de l'Alma was not a banal late Saturday night Parisian road crash; the identity of the victims and the presence of the pursuing press pack distinguish this crash from any other. Otherwise the night's events fit the classic profile of accidental death on the roads of the French capital.

he had to strip naked in front of 50 other children and suffered a flogging which "nearly killed him".

At the age of 16, many migrants were sent to work on farms and told not to return to the orphanages.

They claim that they suffered severe mental and physical abuse involving public floggings at the hands of nuns and brothers - and were treated as orphans although their parents were alive in Britain.

Giving evidence to the Commons health select committee, former child migrant John Hennessy broke down in tears as he recalled his childhood in the Christian Brothers orphanage in Perth, Australia.

Mr Hennessy, now 62, was 10 when he was deported. He said he has been frightened and felt inferior ever since.

"As we got to Perth, we all stood in a line and brothers and sisters were separated straight away. I will never forget their screams," he said.

Once, because he was hungry, he stole some grapes from a vineyard and, as punishment,

how he managed to trace his mother, half-brother and half-sister in 1995.

He said: "When my mother tried to trace me after the war they told her I was lost in evacuation and she accepted it - why wouldn't she believe nuns?"

Mr Dalton said he was in the Sisters of Nazareth orphanage in Swansea at the time and could easily have been found. "There was a blatant cover-up."

Earlier this year, the Sisters of Mercy orphanage in Neck, northern Queensland, apologised after it emerged that hundreds of children, many of them from Britain, suffered torture and sexual abuse.

The order, which committed the cruelties over 90 years, is being investigated by the Queensland state government.

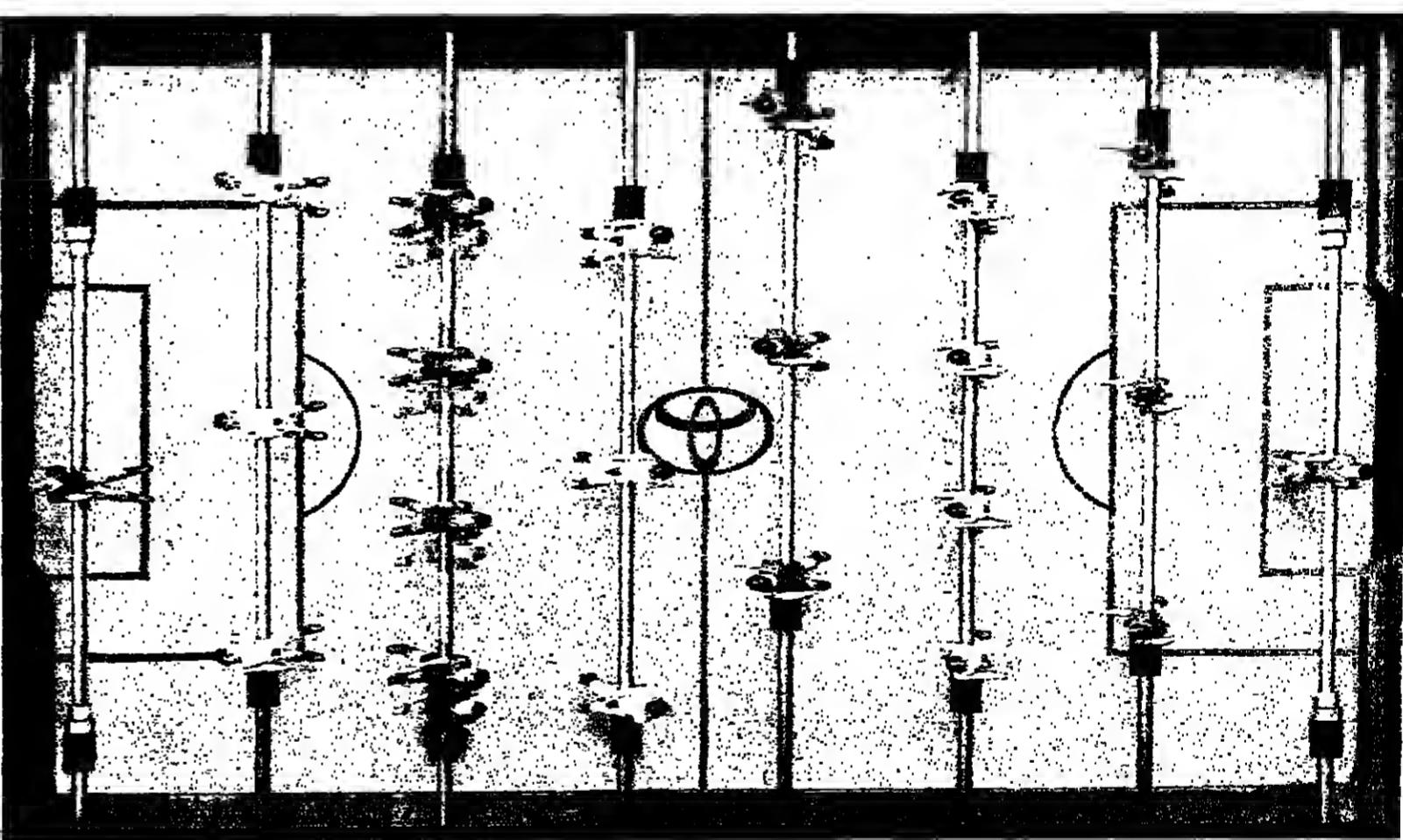
The child immigrant scheme, which was mainly organised by the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of Nazareth was a bid to bring "fresh, good white blood" to former colonies. Hundreds of children were shipped to Australia for a "new start" until 1967.



Svetlana Kapanina, 29, the world champion aerobatic pilot, practising in her Sukhoi aircraft above Biggin Hill airfield in Kent for this weekend's International Air Fair. The event will also mark the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Air Force

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

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Record number of beaches win right to fly Europe's blue flag



Porthmeor, in Cornwall, one of 45 beaches in the UK to be honoured as among the cleanest and safest in Europe

Photograph: David Swannborough

By Michael McCarthy

A total of 45 bathing beaches – 33 in England, 13 in Wales, seven in Northern Ireland and two in Scotland – can measure themselves against the cleanest and safest in Europe, said the Tidy Britain Group, UK organiser of the continent-wide award.

EUROPE'S environmental beach accolade, the European Blue Flag, has been awarded to a record number of beaches in the UK this year, it was announced yesterday.

The blue flags are awarded for meeting a series of management objectives, including beach cleanliness, dog control, wheelchair access, provision of facilities and provision of life-saving equipment.

To qualify, the beaches must

also meet European Union bathing water quality standards.

The UK's total has been steadily improving since 1992, when only 17 beaches received blue flags; in 1996 the total was 31, and last year it was 38.

But to put it into perspective,

compared with the other 18 countries in the scheme, we are still only middle-ranking in terms of success, being far surpassed by Spain, with 369 blue flags; Italy with 342, Greece with 326 and France with 299.

Eveo Denmark (with 185)

and Ireland (with 74) surpass us, although we are ahead of Sweden (37 blue flags), Cyprus (25) and Belgium (nine).

Six UK marinas also gained blue flags in the first year that the scheme has been open to them – three in England, two in

Wales and one in Northern Ireland.

"These results confirm what we have always known – that the UK has some of the best beaches in Europe," said Professor Graham Ashworth, the Tidy Britain Group's director general.

"This is excellent news for tourism in the UK. It is also exciting to see that the environmental lessons learned in the Blue Flag for beaches have now been taken up by marinas, encouraging boat owners to care for their environment."

The UK's cleanest beaches



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TV agony aunt takes on macho Brazil

By Phil Davison
Latin America Correspondent

SHE was Brazil's equivalent to the American agony aunt Dr Ruth, shattering taboos with a daily television show which answered the questions of millions of women, many of them illiterate, about sex. Then she went into politics, forming the feminist "Lipstick Lobby" to challenge Brazil's longstanding male dominance of public life.

Even at 53, Marta Suplicy has trouble casting off the sex symbol image which was imposed on her by the many Brazilian men who used to tune into her show. But she has been instrumental in changing the lives of millions of Brazilian women.

The former sexologist is now a member of parliament for the left-wing Workers' Party, which has been down on its luck during recent years but is attempting a comeback with the help of women candidates. Soon she is likely to run for governor of the nation's most powerful state, São Paulo. She may have little chance of winning but she is bound to strike further blows against Brazil's traditional *machismo* during her campaign.

Marta Suplicy predicts that Brazil will have its first woman president within the next eight years. Given her party's humble recent fortunes, she is too realistic to say it will be her. But if she is right, it will be in no small part due to her efforts.



Marta Suplicy in action. The Workers' Party MP is running for governorship of São Paulo, Brazil's most powerful state

She comes from one of São Paulo's high-society families and, as a fashion trendsetter known for her French designer suits, she at first seemed an odd choice to represent the down-trodden in a country with possibly the biggest gap between rich and poor in the world.

But her daily television show, in which she shocked

Catholic establishment and was billed as "a loose woman" by discussing such things as anal sex, put her into the homes of many of the 80 million or more women in Brazil, who make up 52 per cent of the population. And that meant votes.

When she started her television programme in the early Eighties, men still had the constitutional right to prohibit their wives from going out to work. That clause was scrapped only in 1988.

After being elected to parliament, Ms Suplicy pushed the so-called "quota law", requiring political parties to make at least one in five of their candidates a woman. Her "Lipstick Lobby", an informal group of women leg-

islators from all parties, passed the Bill two years ago.

"Unfortunately, both men and women always saw politics as a male domain," congresswoman Sandra Starling said at the time. "We hope this Quota Law will change that mentality. We hope it will spark a cultural revolution." Ms Suplicy hopes to amend the law this year

to make it one female candidate for every two males.

To press her point, Ms Suplicy issued a handbook entitled *Women Without Fear Of Power: Our Time Has Come*. However, there are still only half a dozen women senators out of a total 81 and only 34 female MPs out of 513.

Despite her bourgeois im-

age, Ms Suplicy's feminism has boosted the fortunes of the Workers' Party, long associated with bearded leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. "Just as in the US and Britain, the political divide has become less black and white here," said a diplomat in the capital, Brasília. "Ms Suplicy is to a large extent the symbol of Brazil's New Left."

While her present power base is restricted to the city and state of São Paulo, Ms Suplicy's feminist policies – including free choice on abortion – are increasingly finding an echo elsewhere, mainly in Rio de Janeiro and other cities. But she will have to make her mark among the poor and often illiterate inhabitants of Brazil's countryside if her party is seriously to challenge President Fernando Henrique Cardoso in presidential elections in October.

Despite his "neo-liberal" capitalist economic policy, Mr Cardoso, 66, is expected to win a second term.

Ms Suplicy and her party claim Mr Cardoso's economic policies are widening the rich-poor divide. Brazil has been rocked in recent weeks by clashes involving farmers who are suffering serious famine as a result of drought. Accusing the authorities of doing nothing to help them, farmers have been looting shops for basic foods. Both Ms Suplicy's party and the Catholic church have condemned the looting, saying the farmers are starving and have no other choice.

America becomes fatter overnight

UP TO 29 million Americans awoke yesterday to a rude surprise. Having thought of themselves as "comfortably average in size and weight", they suddenly found they were about to be re-designated as "obese". This startling turn in their fortunes resulted from a government proposal to define obesity downwards, writes Mary Dejesky in Washington.

The official height-weight scale, which produces the "body mass" index that is used to define obesity, is being revised. In future, someone who stands 5 foot 9 inches tall, for instance, would be considered obese if he or she weighed in at 169 pounds or more, 13 pounds less than at present.

The new index would classify 97 million adults, more than half the adult population of the US, as obese. The revision reflects concern in American health circles about the increasing incidence of obesity and associated diseases such as diabetes and cardiac ailments, and is said – by some of the scientists involved – to be intended to give people a "nudge" towards losing weight.

French pilots poised to call off strike

By John Lichfield in Paris

STRIKING French pilots seemed last night to be ready to abandon a three days' old strike which has threatened to disrupt long-distance travel to the World Cup next week.

As negotiations resumed, it emerged that the main pilots' union had voted to accept the broad outline of concessions offered by Air France and the French government. Many of the details remained undecided, and the views of smaller pilots' unions were unclear, but all the signs pointed to an agreement to call off the strike by today.

A flurry of embarrassing but less significant industrial actions continues. A nationwide strike by ticket inspectors will disrupt train services today but a strike by a minority of train

drivers on the first day of the World Cup next Wednesday is expected to have little impact.

The pilots' strike, which has grounded up to 90 per cent of Air France flights worldwide this week, has been a source of deep mortification to the government. France had hoped that the World Cup would present an image of a welcoming, modern and capable nation.

Examination of the small-print is likely to reveal that the pilots got the best of the argument. Air France had asked the pilots, who earn an average annual salary of £75,000, to accept a 15 per cent pay cut over three years, in return for shares in the company.

On Tuesday, Air France suggested that the pay cut could be "temporary"; in other words the pilot could take the shares and then have their pay levels

Hope of more trauma survivors

Kosovo talks collapse as Serbs torch villages

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Hope of finding more train crash survivors fades

By Imre Karacs
in Eschede

THE small street running past the bungalows and lush gardens of Eschede rises towards the bridge and then it is no more. The flyover that stood there two days ago, linking this neighbourhood with the bigger houses across the tracks is gone. The road ends mid-air.

Below the bridge panels, now resting on the rails, two carriages lie crushed, windows broken, their undercarriages twisted. Rescue workers struggling against the clock managed to free one of the wagons yesterday, but found only more corpses, bringing the toll ever closer to the estimated 100.

From the precipice at the edge of the former flyover, more carriages lie at all sorts of strange angles. Some seem almost intact, others are mangled and sliced into slivers of red and white tin. One wagon rests on the verge, hurtled towards the street by the force of the collision.

The site has been sealed off by police. Eschede gives the impression of being under siege. Ambulances race away towards the nearby towns, the roads tremble under the weight of the armoured vehicles of border troops brought in to help with the task of digging the train out of its concrete sarcophagus.

Under floodlights, crews were taking turns to lift large blocks of rubble with the aid of two large cranes and chains. Fears that a group of schoolchildren lay trapped in the restaurant car proved unfounded, but hope for any survivors has evaporated.

As a special commission was set up to investigate the acci-

dent, German railways denied earlier suggestions that one of its own road vehicles might have caused the tragedy. Attention was shifting last night to a damaged section of the track six kilometres (four miles) from Eschede. Although officials refused to speculate, they did not deny the possibility that one of the carriages might have gone off the rails at this point.

According to this scenario, the carriage was dragged along with one side slightly protruding, and crashed into the pillars supporting the bridge.

Two workers who had been doing signal maintenance on an adjacent track were missing, presumed dead. Their car was crushed beneath the debris, though it was unclear whether it had been parked along the tracks or on the overpass.

Relatives of many victims were still waiting for confirmation yesterday, because some of the bodies had been damaged beyond recognition. Psychologists and special counsellors were brought in to help the victims' relatives and rescue workers unable to cope with the horror of their grisly discoveries.

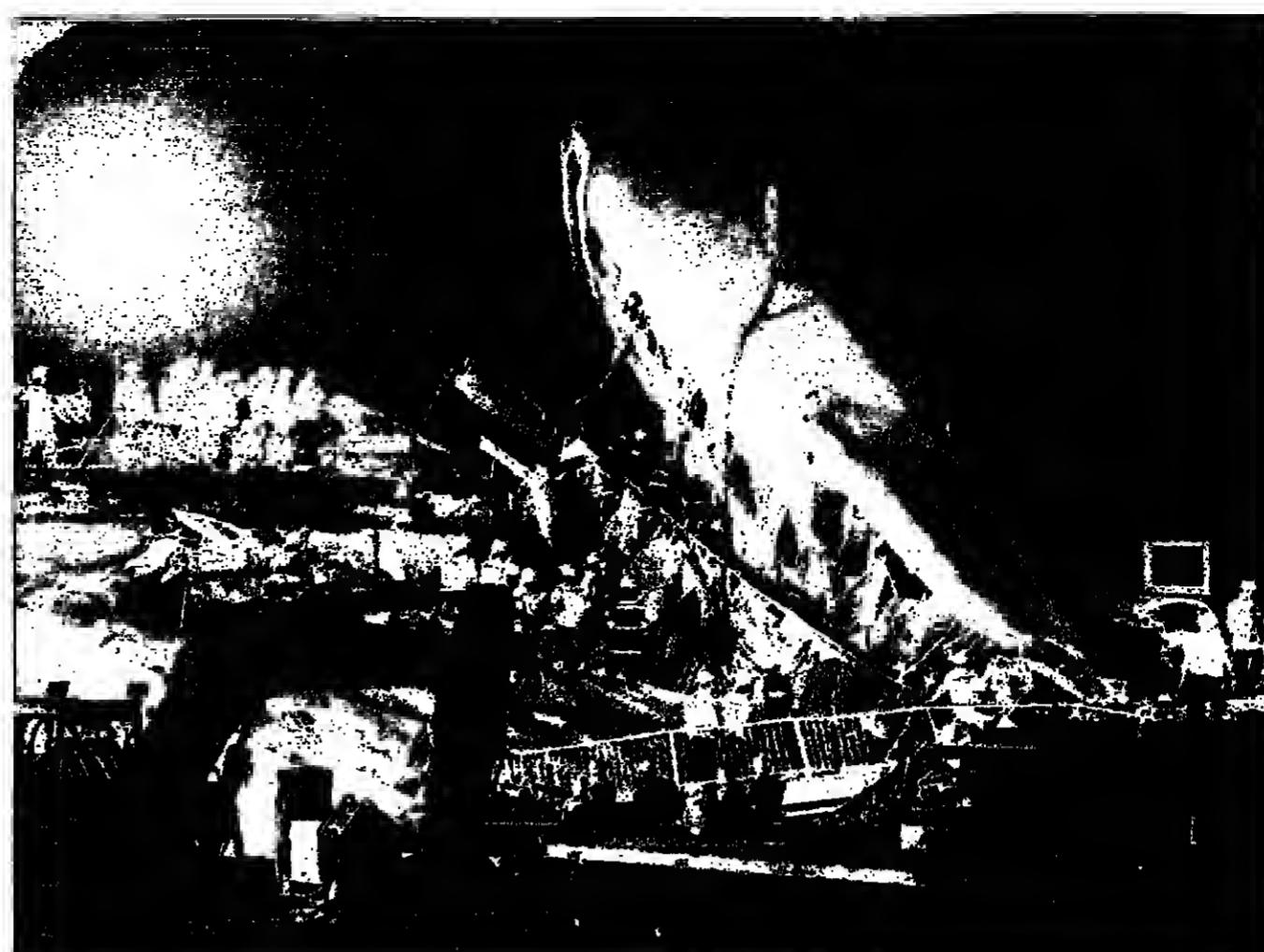
Flags flew at half-mast across Germany, as Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who cut short an official trip to Italy, visited the scene yesterday afternoon. He pledged DM1m government aid, matching the contributions promised by the regional government in Lower Saxony.

The town of Eschede was in shock. Only last year, it organised grand celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of its railway station - a reminder that the track itself, though upgraded in recent years, was very old. In other ar-

eas, new track has been created for the newest express trains.

Meanwhile, as the investigations into the causes of the accident got fully underway, the first doubts about their terms surfaced. In yesterday's *Frankfurter Rundschau*, a former railway official criticised the fact that the inquiry is being conducted internally, rather than bringing in outside experts to establish the exact cause of the accident.

"If a well-known car manufacturer has a car which turns over, it doesn't just go to the nearest MoT point to have the thing looked at. He gets the best experts in the country, to examine the causes - and immediately."



Rescue workers - working under floodlights - use a crane to lift one of the derailed carriages early yesterday as they continued their search for victims buried under the wreckage of Wednesday's crash, at Eschede in northern Germany, which left at least 100 people dead.

Photograph:
Jan Bauer/AP

Kosovo talks collapse as Serbs torch villages

By Rupert Cornwell

AS TENSIONS mounted further in Kosovo, leaders of the province's ethnic Albanian majority last night pulled out of scheduled talks with Serbian authorities, and a senior European foreign minister urged direct Nato intervention to restore stability in the region.

The talks had been due today, but representatives of the ethnic Albanians said that they had been rendered pointless by the latest massive Serb offensive, which had taken scores of lives, reduced entire villages to rubble and made up to 50,000 people homeless.

Simultaneously, pressure intensified for stronger action from the West to halt the fighting. Speaking at a regional summit in the Ukrainian resort of Yalta, the Albanian Foreign Minister, Paskal Milo, said the province was "on the eve of open war", while his German opposite number, Klaus Kinkel, demanded immediate measures to prevent a flood of refugees into the European Union.

"Nato will be there to intervene this time if necessary," Mr Kinkel said at an EU meeting in Palermo. He vowed there would be no repeat of the inaction

which allowed the Bosnian war to drag on for three years.

Almost certainly, the contact group of leading Western powers will meet in the next few days, and at the very least reimpose the economic sanctions on Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic that were briefly suspended after he agreed to enter the talks. It may also accelerate and expand Nato's plans to impose a *cordone sanitario* around Kosovo.

Albania, already Europe's poorest country, has appealed for extra foreign aid to help with the 12,000 refugees from Kosovo it is housing, not to mention the thousands more seeking to join them. Officials in Tirana also warn of "hot pursuit" raids by the Serbs into Albania proper, a first step towards a feared internationalisation of the crisis.

Since February, more than 250 people have died in the fighting, including 20 Serbian police killed by guerrillas of the Kosovo Liberation Army, whose campaign for full independence has radicalised the conflict, and eroded the influence of ethnic Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova, who opposes the use of violence.

Thanks however to Mr Milosevic, violence is engulfing the region, and Mr Rugova's room for manoeuvre is shrinking daily.

Botha claims bias

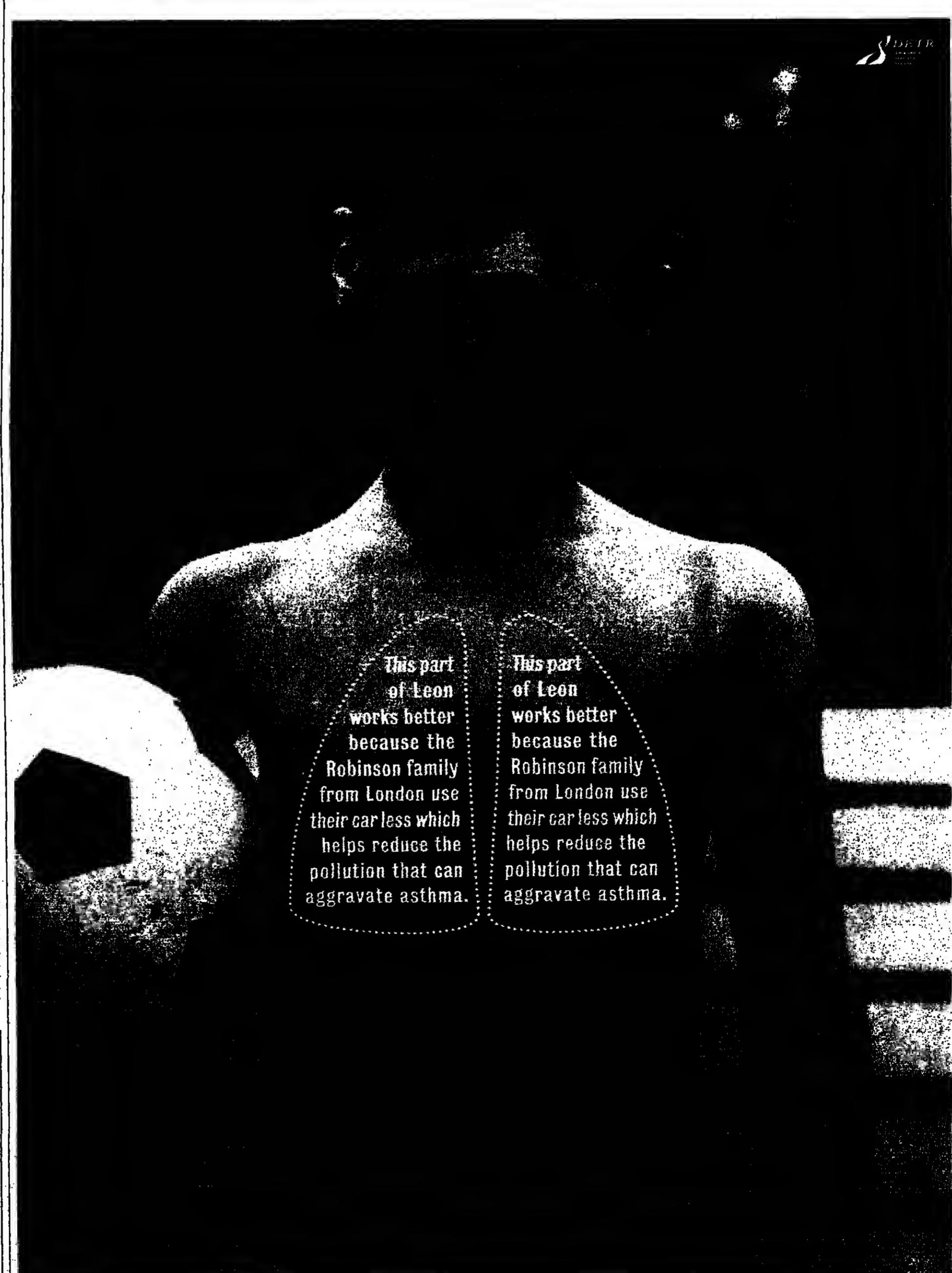
ARCHBISHOP Desmond Tutu yesterday denied his Truth and Reconciliation Commission was biased. Argument about the morality of apartheid raged at the trial of former president PW Botha, 82, who is charged with contempt for refusing to testify at the commission over claims that his government endorsed human rights violations. Botha's lawyers sought to prove that the probe was not even-handed. — Reuters, George

Viagra could save rhinos

THE new potency pill Viagra could help save Africa's endangered rhino, a South African conservationist said yesterday. "Viagra is supposed to aid one's sex life," said David Newton of Traffic, which monitors trade in wild animals. "Maybe now this will take over and reduce the myth that the rhino horn is an aphrodisiac." — Reuters, Cape Town

Lesbian sentenced to death

A UKRAINIAN woman was sentenced to death after killing a man who flirted with her and two other people who allegedly teased her for being a lesbian. — AP, Kiev



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India and Pakistan told to halt arms race

By Rupert Cornwell

THE "Big Five" nuclear powers last night mounted a concerted effort to halt the south Asian arms race, and persuade India and Pakistan to sign international treaties banning nuclear tests and preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.

At a hastily arranged meeting at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva, the foreign ministers of Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States – the five permanent members of the UN Security Council who are also the "official" nuclear states – called on Delhi and Islamabad to hold off from further tests and commit themselves to ending production of the fissile material required for nuclear weapons.

After the initial muddled response to India's tests, with the US imposing sanctions and most of its allies refusing to follow suit, the Geneva session was designed to show how the world's nearest thing to a "directorate" of dominant powers is retaking the initiative in the proliferation issue.

But the display of unity, and the shared fear that the Indian and Pakistani tests could encourage other states to go nuclear, belies wide differences among the Five on how to proceed, now that sanctions, and the threat of sanctions, have been proved useless as a deterrent.

"This will not be a punitive meeting," British officials said, thus endorsing the argument of the Russian foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, that punishing India and Pakistan will only make them less inclined to go along with the wishes of the international community.

But the Americans are adamant

that the two must not be rewarded for their tests by being given some form of enhanced nuclear status, and least of all by being reclassified as fully-fledged nuclear states alongside the P-5 countries under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), cornerstone since 1970 of international efforts to keep such weapons in as few hands as possible.

Any step in that direction, Washington warns, would simply encourage other countries, including some in flashpoint regions like the Middle East, to try and join the club and thus render the NPT a dead letter.

But for all the new tension they have generated, and whatever the undeniable risk of further proliferation, last month's tit-for-tat tests, five by India and six by Pakistan, have at least shaken up the global nuclear debate, and forced some of its basic assumptions to be re-examined.

At a minimum it will give the US and Russia cause to speed up negotiations on further cuts in their arsenals, accounting for over 90 per cent of all nuclear weapons, and which provide India its main argument in refusing to join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, signed by 149 countries. Why should we renounce nuclear weapons, Delhi asks, when other countries insist on keeping theirs?

Washington and Moscow signed the Start II treaty in the early 1990s. But the Duma has failed to ratify it, and until this happens the US says it will not embark on the far more ambitious Start III talks on which both sides are agreed in principle. And before these negotiations reach fruition, Britain and France refuse to contemplate getting rid of their weapons.



An Italian fisherman throwing his knife at Greenpeace demonstrators yesterday off the coast of Sardinia. The environmental activists were protesting against driftnet fishing and had disabled an Italian boat's nets

Photograph: Reuters

Euro club shows Brown the door

By Katherine Butler
in Luxembourg

GORDON BROWN, the Chancellor, subjected himself to formal humiliation last night as ministers from the 11 euro-zone countries gathered at a chateau in Luxembourg for the inaugural meeting of their single currency inner circle, Euro-XI.

As representative of Britain's European Union presidency Mr Brown was insisting on his right to attend the opening formalities at Schloss Saarbrücken Castle, but was told he would have to leave the room almost immediately. He was not allowed to attend a dinner that followed the first

meeting of the new G8-style body which will co-ordinate economic policy in the euro-area.

Senior officials of the euro-zone countries expressed amazement at his decision to muscle in on the informal meeting in the light of Britain's decision to opt out of the single currency. It merely highlighted Britain's political marginalisation, they said.

"He is a gatecrasher," said Bonn source, "he is bringing himself down to a level even ambassadors would not accept." Another senior EU diplomat described British strategy as "naïve" and said it reflected the difficulty London has in under-

standing that Britain will not be at the heart of things.

Mr Brown will be back in the chair this morning when all 15 finance ministers hold one of their routine monthly meetings, also in Luxembourg.

Tony Blair battled tooth and nail last year to prevent the establishment of Euro-XI without Britain. At a summit of EU heads of government in December he claimed that he had managed to reduce the status of the new group to an informal dining circle and that Britain would be automatically present for any meaningful discussions.

But other governments insist that

the 11 participating ministers alone will decide what constitutes a matter of "common interest" when the meetings will be opened up to the four "outs": Britain, Denmark, Greece and Sweden.

Last night's first meeting was organised during the British EU presidency in what some officials believe was an attempt by the French to score a political point by demonstrating the practical consequences of Britain's EMU opt-out. Mr Brown was replaced in the chair after a few minutes by Rudolph Edlinger, the Austrian finance minister whose government succeeds Britain in the EU chair next month.

Bulgaria's exiled king scores a palace coup

By Marcus Tanner

IN AN extraordinary ruling – that will have Europe's other ex-royals salivating with envy – Bulgaria's High Court yesterday handed back to the exiled heir to the throne all the former dynasty's property.

Simeon II, who was 10 when the Communists seized the royal estates in 1947 and has spent most of his adult life as a businessman in Spain, was transformed at the stroke of a judge's pen to one of Europe's greatest landowners and the proud possessor of palaces at Vranya, near the capital Sofia, and Czarska (Emperor's) Bistritsa, in the Rila mountains, 50 miles south of Sofia.

Also thrown in are three hunting lodges in the hills and two humble farm houses near the city of Plovdiv.

It is an astonishing turn of fortune for the Bulgarian branch of the Coburg family and one not repeated in any other former people's republics in Eastern Europe, none of which has returned to their former royals significant amounts of their former estates.

The Bulgarian royals had an eccentric reputation – a good thing, perhaps, in the Balkans. The first Bulgarian Coburg, "Fox" Ferdinand, who abdicated after the First World War, often embarrassed his fellow royals with his bizarre manner and dress sense.

But he was a great diplomat and was famous, too, for his unrivalled collection of rare butterflies. His son, Boris, Simeon's late father, is still remembered by some for his love of driving steam trains.

Simeon himself reigned briefly in Sofia before the Communists forced him out in 1946. But absence – clearly – has only made the heart grow fonder.

For while most Romanians, Serbs and Russians seem to have put the monarchy well behind them, Simeon won a tumultuous ovation from the crowds during two brief returns to his homeland in 1996 and 1997.

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Pilgrims follow Rasputin's steps

By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

A PILGRIMAGE is under way in Russia that, if successfully completed, will far outshine even the feats of the foot-slogging Rasputin, the self-styled holy man who mesmerised the court of the last tsar, Nicholas II, and his wife Alexandra.

Historians have questioned boasts made by the bedraggled Siberian peasant that he once saw an apparition of the Virgin Mary which inspired him to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. But he does seem to have trekked around Russia, joining the legion of clerics, self-proclaimed prophets and assorted cranks who wandered the length and breadth of the country dispensing their wisdom and living off the charity of others.

Now – a century on – he is about to be outclassed. A small party of Russian Orthodox pilgrims has set off from Vladivostok on the Sea of Japan to walk 6,300 miles across Siberia and the Urals to Moscow in European Russia.

Although some intend to use public transport for parts of the journey, others plan to walk the whole way. Carrying icons for the entire route, they expect to cover just under 20 miles a day, arriving in Moscow a week after the turn of the millennium – on 7 January 2000, Orthodox's Christmas Day.

Like the wandering clerics of the past, they plan to baptise people, recruit converts and conduct weddings in the towns and villages along their path. The journey will take them across seven time zones and an unforgiving, empty landscape in which winter temperatures can plunge to -45 degrees and are constantly well below freezing. "This is to remind people that they are Russian," one



The pilgrims setting off from Vladivostok will walk 6,300 miles and cross seven time zones

pre-dates the founding of the church in Kiev in the 10th century. By the 15th and 16th century, perpetual wandering had become a form of Christian asceticism, as had its opposite – pillar-like immobility (one particularly zealous character, Ilya of Murom allegedly remained sitting immobile, for 30 years).

"There have always been in Russia people called 'strannik' who spent their life travelling from one monastery to another, praying and even making prophecies," said Yuri Minulin, president of the Orthodox Pilgrimage Centre in Moscow. Ivan the Terrible made frequent

matched. One of those joining the pilgrimage to Moscow was Igor Chernozatonsky, head of a pyramid investment scheme which crashed last year, bilking 55,000 investors in the Far East. When his fund fell apart, he disappeared. This week he suddenly resurfaced among the monks and other pilgrims on the road, claiming that the Virgin Mary had instructed him to walk to Moscow. "This is God's punishment for my sins," he told reporters as he trudged solemnly along, icon in hand, increasing the distance between him and his creditors with every step.

of the party, Mikhail Alexandrov, 41, told the Vladivostok News as they set out. "It's to return to our base, the only base of the Russian people: the Orthodox faith. It is the only belief that can strengthen our motherland and restore our people."

In contrast to the Soviet era – when the Church was restricted and, at times, severely repressed – the pilgrims were waved off cheerfully by the regional governor, a Kremlin representative, and the local head of the security services.

The concept of the pilgrimage – or "palomnik" – and its long, painful, penitential treks into a hostile wilderness is deeply embedded in the Russian Orthodox tradition, and

pilgrimages to Russia's long chain of monastic shrines. Nor was he the only tsar to do so: Nicholas II and his wife Alexandra went on trips to monasteries to pray – to no avail, as it turned out. Some Russians went further afield: by the 19th century, well-off believers were travelling to the Holy Land in significant numbers, a practice that has since revived.

In the last few years, advertisements – unimaginable under Communism – have begun appearing in the press and churches offering pilgrimages to religious sites in France, Israel and elsewhere.

The Vladivostok-Moscow trek coincides with another, darker, reminder that the distinction between past and present in the Orthodox Church is barely visible. Reports surfaced this week of a conflict between clerics, centring on allegations that the conservative churchman, Bishop Nikon of Yekaterinburg, has ordered that "heretical books" be confiscated from theological students at an ecclesiastical school and publicly burned.

Meanwhile, even Rasputin's claim to have had a divine appointment has been

RUSSIA'S legal system yesterday found itself facing a dilemma: should it rehabilitate a man who was executed on wholly bogus charges, even though he was himself one of the authors of the campaign of terror that destroyed him?

The person in question is one of Stalin's henchmen, Nikolai Yezhov, who as head of the NKVD secret police between 1936-38, presided over purges – killings and imprisonment – on a scale unprecedented in Russian history.

A PRO-DEMOCRACY supporter and his son taking part in a rain-drenched candlelit vigil in Hong Kong yesterday, on the ninth anniversary of the Tianan-

men Square massacre in Peking. In the first such ceremony under Chinese rule, tens of thousands of Hong Kong residents gathered in Victoria Park to mourn the students who died in the massacre. Even though Peking has kept a tight rein on Hong Kong since reassuming sovereignty last July, those who

came to the vigil said it was important to remember those who died, and to ensure that their own rights do not erode.

Photograph: Craig Allen/AP

Fight to clear Stalin's butcher

By Phil Reeves

The case, before the Military Board of Russia's Supreme Court, was brought at the request of a woman claiming to be Yezhov's adopted daughter, Natalya. Under the law, any Russian can apply to the court for the rehabilitation of victims of Stalin's mass repression.

She has been seeking his rehabilitation on the token charges for which he was executed: high treason, spying for foreign powers – including Britain – and the murder of his wife, who was poisoned two years before his death. He was shot in 1940, and replaced by the even more

fearful Lavrenty Beria (who was also later shot).

The charges will have had a familiar ring to Yezhov, as they frequently appeared on the lists of thousands of names which Stalin sent to him, with instructions that they should be killed. Yezhov had a team of several hundred NKVD killers who carried out the slaughter. Citing espionage charges, Yezhov purged almost all of the NKVD, most of whom was shot in the head after a perfunctory trial.

Russia's courts, one might argue, have more pressing matters to wor-

ry about, including corruption, chaos in the legal system, official crime and millions of unpaid workers. But the case has raised a difficult point of principle, articulated by Sergei Kovalev, Russia's leading human rights activist. He has argued that all executed Stalin-era secret police bosses – no matter how terrible – should be acquitted of the charges brought against them because they were "fake and nonsense".

The court took a different view yesterday. It refused to review Yezhov's case, arguing that he was "not fit for rehabilitation".

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You are what you spend



What does your money mean to you - do you splash it or save it? Therapist Dorothy Rowe says personality can be a key to financial fortunes.

By Andrew G Marshall

"MONEY has moved centre-stage in our lives, beforehand it was just something we earned and our concerns were about getting a pay rise," says Dorothy Rowe, one of Britain's foremost self-help authors and psychologists.

"When I was working in the Fifties and Sixties, we always knew when the next rise was due and concentrated on that. Now we have a much broader focus and more anxiety. It is difficult to find out what is happening and the implications."

We might be richer, but we are more confused about money than ever before. With no shortage of financial experts anxious to help us invest or explain the latest economic theory, we have reached information overload.

"It was only during the Eighties that people started thinking of money in a broader context and all national newspapers, including the tabloids, started carrying financial sections. Money used to be something you left to the bank manager, the chancellor of the exchequer and people who understood about those sorts of things.

"Going abroad for our holidays has meant that ordinary people have had to pay attention to the strength of the pound while the Thatcher government talked all the time about money."

The result is that we are bombarded with figures but have little understanding of our emotional relationship with money. So the time is ripe for Ms Rowe's eleventh

was a hoarder who tried to make certain that nothing was wasted. Special things had to be hidden and kept for special times."

Rowe's own personal conflict stretch back to this time. "My father would impress on me that money could disappear and it was nothing you could rely on. He would explain that there were situations where money was valueless - you can't eat it."

"In my marriage, money certainly disappeared very quickly, my husband did not look after it at all. Even though for the past 10 years I haven't had to think about money, in terms of getting from one pay-day to the next, I still have this idea that money can vanish."

Money will always be misunderstood because we use it in two very different ways: to maintain physical survival and maintain our sense of identity. Unfortunately our need to feed the later can override our better judgement of the former.

"It is difficult to unhook the real necessities from what we just consider are necessities," says Rowe. "Our incomes have steadily increased, but our absolute needs have increased much quicker. I like to eat the very best parmesan from the fromagerie up the street, rather than a packet of grated from the supermarket - it is a difference I just cannot give up."

As a society we may find it easier to discuss personal matters more openly than our parents did, but money is still a very difficult topic, with friends happier to reveal their favourite sexual position than their bank balance. In a larger public arena it is even more difficult.

"It is easier to talk about money with somebody who is on the same earnings band as yourself. When there is a discrepancy, or could be, it becomes difficult because it raises issues of envy and pity. 'Being pitied is horrible. It really diminishes you,' she explains.

Talking to Ms Rowe, it becomes clear that only by understanding ourselves can we really understand money and what we are doing with it. "Sometimes people are fighting old battles and staying off disasters that are not real," she says. "Of necessity, I've always been a very independent person and had to look after myself; it is a very important part of who I am. Hopefully, when I'm older and need help, I will recognise that this desire could get in the way of what is best for me."

If the key to making good decisions about money is knowing yourself, we might need to think again about who we put in charge. "Although a lot of people today have gone to quite a lot of trouble to become self-aware - unfortunately Gordon Brown is not one of them! Men, in particular, rationalise to avoid looking at who they are. I'm sure we could find the



Photographs: Rui Xavier/Eric Larragardie

explanation for his tight fiscal policy in his puritanical Scottish upbringing.

"The ideas we overvalue are the ones we over-rationalise and defend to the death. Politicians, in general, are the last people to trust with money because they have no self-awareness whatsoever. In adversarial politics, MPs are forced to lie to toe the party line. What's worse, some of them even lie to themselves and if you lie to yourself you are bound to end up in trouble."

The central theme running through all Ms Rowe's books is that although we can not control events, we can change the way we view them. "What determines our

behaviour is not what happens to us, but how we interpret these events. It is something that even well-educated people do not understand."

Her technique involves peeling back the layers of meaning until the essence of our existence is revealed. Ms Rowe calls this effect ladder, each step is linked with the question: why is it important to you that, in this case, you are careful with money?

"If I look after money, I am more likely to achieve what I want," she replies. Why is it important to you to achieve? "It is what life is about."

By understanding our psychological

bottom line it is easier to prioritise spending and divide the essentials from what society in general considers important. If we are more honest about our attitudes to money, perhaps we will feel less anxious.

However there is one central problem. "Money relates to the past and the future, and you can only be happy in the present," Ms Rowe believes. "Although you need to think about the consequence of your actions, the secret of a satisfying life is the ability to live in the moment."

'The Real Meaning of Money' is published by HarperCollins, price £7.99.

'Politicians, in general, are the last people to trust with money because they have no self-awareness whatsoever'

book, *The Real Meaning of Money*.

As any therapist will tell you, the starting point of all voyages of self-discovery is the past. Rowe herself was born during the depression in an Australian coal and steel area, inappropriately called Happy Valley.

"My father was a commercial traveller for a food firm. Towards the end of the week we needed to see what Dad had in his brown leather suitcase of samples for our dinner! It was very difficult for my parents to manage.

"My father was very generous and would give money away, while my mother

would be a hoarder who tried to make certain that nothing was wasted. Special things had to be hidden and kept for special times."

When we talk of our tongues we refer to the pre-hensile flap of pink muscle and taste-bud which extends from the back of our throat to the front of our mouth and, when we feel the need, beyond.

Invariably, there would be a scene where the zinc or the nickel is suddenly removed from the front of the mouth to the chintz leading to the stomach, which undulates to give us the full vocal armoury of "t's" and "d's" and "k's" and "g's". But the tongue is a damned great thing, its substructure anchored to the lower jaw and neck and it is from that muscle lump that a tumour the size of a golf ball was excised last year.

Which may sound an unlikely simile for the way I feel at the moment, but it is, I promise you, an accurate one.

I am without my voice, and while I could have guessed at some of the effects the loss might have produced, my real concern is with the effects that have come as a surprise.

When I say I'm without my voice I don't mean that I'm without any voice at all, simply that the one I have isn't mine. It isn't anybody's much, nor even much of a voice at all. It is the lumpy and asymmetrical remnant of a voice that once was, a fragment around which I'm trying to build a new voice.

A year ago, more or less, I had about a third of my tongue removed. It was the



John Diamond, who had to have a third of his tongue removed after it was found to be cancerous

tongue they closed the gap by dragging the whole of the front of it towards the back. Then they gave me six weeks of daily irradiation which left the remaining tissue red and painful.

My tongue can reach the teeth at the front, but go no further forward, and after six months or more of speech therapy, I have perhaps a quarter of an inch of movement up and down and side to side.

It means that while you form a "t" by flicking the tip of your tongue to the top-front of your mouth, I do it by moving my whole jaw. You make a "k" by rolling the back of your tongue so that it clicks against the roof of the mouth and I do it by raising my larynx to get an approximation of the sound.

It is a cumbersome way of

dwarf in the riddle who takes the lift down but walks up 10 flights because he can reach the lower "G" button but not the higher "I", can cab it quite happily into the West End, but not back again. I live in the Goldhawk Road, a particular combination of sounds which I now find almost impossible.

But I never do.

Things are getting better. I have a speech therapist who is wonderful and who sets me homework repeating unusable sentences. I usually skip the homework in the hope that the sentences I actually use will do the job of re-educating my stiff tongue just as well.

I am learning to speak more slowly, which helps. But - Which - Makes - Me - Feel - I'm - Giving - Dictation - To - Cretins - In - A - Foreign - Language.

I will, I hope, one day broadcast again, or if not that then at least crack a joke which the radio producer, letting me down gently, will understand.

But still I am not yet me because so much of me was my voice, my incontinent chatter. My chattering was a bad habit, I know, but unlike the bad habit which caused the cancer, it's one I'm desperate to get back.

'Inside Story: Tongue Tied', John Diamond's disquisition on life, death and cancer, is on BBC1 on 15 June at 10.30pm. *'C - Because Cowards Get Cancer Too'* is published by Vermilion on 11 June, price £9.99.

FIND OUT WHO THEY

FA
AT FRANCE 98



Tony Adams of Arsenal & England

"I don't fear anybody. I respect all the great strikers. Ronaldo etc, but there is not one player in the World Cup I fear."

The essential World Cup Guide

Free in this week's Independent on Sunday a 32 page colour guide, with team by team analysis, interviews with England stars past and present and a spotlight on Brazil's brilliant Denilson

'All I want is to chatter and joke again'

Cancer robbed broadcaster John Diamond of his most precious asset - his voice. He tells of his battle to be heard

IF YOU are, like me, a child of the discovery age, you will remember normal childhood lessons being punctuated by those grainy educational films put out by the Federation of Aluminium Smelters or the Society of Tin Extractors or whatever, showing us how important was their exciting product to our humdrum lives.

Invariably, there would be a scene where the zinc or the nickel is suddenly removed from the front of the mouth to the chintz leading to the stomach, which undulates to give us the full vocal armoury of "t's" and "d's" and "k's" and "g's".

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tongue they closed the gap by dragging the whole of the front of it towards the back. Then they gave me six weeks of daily irradiation which left the remaining tissue red and painful.

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It is a cumbersome way of

bear repetition. It's a quick, jokey line, meaningless, useless unless you bear it the first time round. But they insist. Somebody else repeats it for me. Everyone smiles. I feel stupid. Next time I will know better.

But I never do.

Things are getting better. I have a speech therapist who is wonderful and who sets me homework repeating unusable sentences. I usually skip the homework in the hope that the sentences I actually use will do the job of re-educating my stiff tongue just as well.

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مكتبة من الأصل

لذا من الأصل

Joseph C. Harsch

JOSEPH C. HARSCH – he was always most insistent on the inclusion of his middle initial in his byline – was an outstanding American writer on foreign affairs. He contributed to the *Christian Science Monitor* for well over 60 years. British listeners may recall his stimulating BBC broadcasts in the *American Commentary* series started by Raymond Gram Swing. Harsch was a foreign correspondent who had a happy knack of managing to be at the right place at the right time.

He was a young reporter for the *Christian Science Monitor* in Washington when Herbert Hoover began to grasp the magnitude of the Great Depression, and when Franklin Roosevelt inaugurated the New Deal to tackle it. He was in London on 3 September 1939 when Neville Chamberlain announced the declaration of war against Germany. Soon afterwards he was in Berlin, the first correspondent to cover both sides in the Second World War. He was in Hawaii, on his way to the Soviet Union, on 7 December 1941 when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He was with General Douglas MacArthur in Australia when he made his famous "I shall return" speech. He reported from the liberated concentration camps in 1945. He travelled behind the newly forged Iron Curtain in 1947 and 1949.

Harsch's book *The Curtain Isn't Iron*, published in 1950, challenged the then prevalent American assumption that war with the Soviet Union was ultimately inevitable. He was one of the first to forecast the eventual collapse of Russian domination of Eastern Europe. His earlier book *Pattern of Conquest*, issued in 1941 before America entered the war, brilliantly analysed the German drive for power.

He was not only a good eyewitness reporter of the major events of the 20th century for the *Christian Science Monitor* and for all three of the major broadcasting networks. He was also steeped in history and able to relate those events to their wider historical context.

Harsch was a lightly built man with a beaky nose and a puckish sense of humour. He grew up in Ohio, where his father had become a Christian

Scientist. He studied history at Williams College in Massachusetts, writing the thesis for his MA degree on the Hundred Years War. He then came for further education to Corpus Christi, Cambridge. His dispatches and columns were always rich in historical allusions and comparisons.

It was when he was the bureau chief of the *Christian Science Monitor* in Berlin that Harsch made his first broadcasts, covering on occasion for William Shirer, the famous Berlin correspondent of the Columbia Broadcasting System, who had been the earliest recruit of Edward R. Murrow, CBS's chief war correspondent. In 1943 Harsch, by that time no longer a foreign correspondent, also joined CBS. From then until 1949, in addition to writing a column for the *Christian Science Monitor*, he broadcast a regular thoughtful news analysis from the CBS Washington station WTOP.

When Raymond Gram Swing relinquished the weekly *American Commentary* towards the end of the war the BBC replaced him with Harsch, speaking from Washington, alternating with Clifton Utley, speaking from Chicago. Harsch's familiarity with Britain and his clarity of thought made him an ideal interpreter of developments in the American capital.

In 1953 Harsch joined the National Broadcasting Company as a news analyst and four years later gave up the opportunity of co-authoring a syndicated column with his great friend Walter Lippmann in order to return to London as NBC's senior European correspondent. He became a well-known figure on the London scene. The Queen invited him to one of her private luncheons. He was a popular member of the Garrick Club, where he served on the committee and was made a life member. Indeed

he was always a most clubbable man. He also belonged to the St James's in London, the Metropolitan and the Cosmos in Washington, the Century in New York and the St Botolph in Boston.

He was stationed in London in the wake of Suez, a time when there were considerable pressures testing the Anglo-American alliance. His broadcasts to the United States sympathetically interpreted what was happening in Britain. When he left to return to America to become NBC's diplomatic correspondent in 1965 he was appointed an honorary CBE. Like many in the American stage army of news commentators, after two years he changed networks again. From 1967 to 1971 he was a commentator for the American Broadcasting Company. After that he broadcast less, but he loyally continued his column for the *Christian Science Monitor*. In 1989 his 60 years on the paper were given a great celebration. Its reputa-

tion for the quality of its coverage of foreign affairs, acknowledged by non-Christian Scientists, owes much to Harsch.

Joe Harsch married in 1932

Anne Wood, one of two daughters of an American admiral.

Both sisters had houses in Jamestown, Rhode Island, a friendly community across Narragansett Bay from Newport. Anne died in January 1997 and Joe was desolate after 65 years of an extremely happy marriage.

Edna Raemer, who had

been his editorial assistant for a quarter of a century, moved to Jamestown to help him edit his work on the history of the

Harsch family who had arrived in America from the southern Rhineland in 1743. On the eve of his 93rd birthday they decided to get married.

Leonard Miall

Joseph Close Harsch, writer and broadcaster; born Toledo, Ohio 25 May 1905; contributor, *Christian Science Monitor* 1929-93, Washington correspondent 1931-39, foreign correspondent 1939-42; Chief Editorial Writer 1971-74; Senior European Correspondent, NBC 1957-65; Diplomatic Correspondent 1965-67; CBE (Hon) 1965; Commentator, ABC 1967-71; married 1932 Anne Wood (died 1997; three sons); 1998 Edna Raemer; died Jamestown, Rhode Island 3 June 1998.

THE INDEPENDENT

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Mild pain, but the Bank is right

INTEREST RATES have only risen by 1.5 percentage points since the election last year, in six bite-sized, quarter-point stages including yesterday's surprise move, but we are beginning to feel the pinch now. So what is going on? Are we in good times or bad, boom or bust? The truth is we are somewhere in between. Unfortunately this is not the Goldilocks economy of American dreams, neither too hot nor too cold. The British economy is more like Mother Bear and Father Bear's porridge mixed together, overheating in parts and stone cold elsewhere. Manufacturing industry is technically in recession, squeezed by interest rates and a high pound, while consumer spending is buoyant and house prices have not yet felt the chill of dearer mortgages.

It is, of course, exporters who make the most noise, while estate agents slap another £10,000 on the asking price in silence, which makes it sound as if things are worse than they are. Nor should we be too distracted by the illusion that the Asian meltdown is on the verge of pulling the world into slump. We have heard so much about globalisation that it is tempting to see the Russian economy as the next domino, but the crisis in Russia is almost exclusively internal. It is tempting, too, to fear that if Japanese and Korean investment in Britain goes temporarily AWOL, there will be no jobs for unemployed former miners in Wales. But we should remember that Norwegian and Australian companies invest much more here – only they tend not to go for the high-profile, high-subsidy greenfield sites.

But we should not be complacent. There is evidence that those parts of the British economy which are booming could be stoking up inflationary trouble for the future. Inflationary expectations may be low as a result of our long run of low inflation since the pound was devalued out of the exchange rate mechanism in 1992. But the present state of the housing market especially suggests that Britain's even longer-run inflationary psychology has not yet been broken, and the Bank of England is right to tighten the screws. It would be all too easy to dismiss the recent rise in inflation as a blip caused by tax rises, but the last time we had a blip it got the Conservative Party where it is today, as well as doing serious damage to the economy. Indeed, this newspaper has consistently argued that rates should have been raised earlier. The Monetary Policy Committee held off from doing that in recent months only because of the strength of the pound. Its recent drop has obviously tipped the balance in the evenly divided committee.

Contrary to the impression given by the jargon of "the cumulative tightening of the labour market" in the committee's report, setting interest rates is an inexact science. The point to remember is that we will not know the impact of yesterday's decision for at least a year, by which time it will be too late to do anything about it if it is wrong. Given that the long-run dangers of inflation are greater than the short-run costs of the squeeze, the Bank is right to err on the side of caution.

Let us end this game of Commons softball

THE ABILITY of Parliament to hold the Government to account has diminished, is diminishing and ought to be increased. This loss of accountability has been worsened by the growing trend for MPs to ask planted questions, soft full-blown of which the minister is already aware." We heartily agree. But these are not the words of Andrew Mackinlay, the heroic Labour backbencher who writes for us today. They are those of Alastair Campbell, now the Prime Minister's press secretary, writing about the "crisis of confidence in Parliament" in the now defunct *Today* newspaper, 10 March 1994.

Mr Mackinlay performed a valuable service in reminding Tony Blair of what was obvious to him and to his entourage before they found themselves in a position to be held to account. On Wednesday Mr Mackinlay used almost the same phrasing as Mr Campbell's four years ago: "Does the Prime Minister recall that, when we were in opposition, we used to groan at the fawning, obsequious, soft-ball, well-rehearsed and planted questions asked by Conservative members?" We all used to groan, and the truth is that Mr Mackinlay hit it that we are groaning at the other lot now. There was one of those rare moments of surprise and recognition in the Commons at his question, and a rushing roar of approval which was not entirely unconfined to the opposition benches.

Mr Blair should listen to that sound, re-read some of his press secretary's old columns and remember what he thought when he was looking in on the secret garden of power in frustration. Then he should implement the Mackinlay manifesto, by accepting the democratic good faith of backbench MPs "who wish to provide scrutiny and accountability in this place" and by acting on the ideas for modernising Parliament floated yesterday. In the end, this government will secure its position in public affection not by rigid discipline ensuring its MPs stay on message and Parliament becomes an arm of its propaganda machine, but by dealing openly with justified criticism. As Mr Campbell said in 1994: "You wonder, if the Government itself shows such repeated contempt for Parliament, why its members are surprised when the public expresses contempt for them."

Three strikes and...

PREPARE to resist the easy assumptions of the 1970s. It seems that industrial action has only to be threatened in three unrelated trades – in this case, broadcasting, firefighting and the London Underground – and we are facing a "summer of discontent", or a "new wave of industrial militancy". It helps that all three industries are high-profile and interest the metropolitan middle classes. (The Liverpool dockers were on strike for aeons and no one paid a blind bit of notice.) The rest of us should simply prepare for a summer of mild irritation.



MILES KINGTON

THE THING that really separates the British from the Americans is our use of rhyming slang. As all Americans know, the streets of our great cities are full of Cockney people speaking to each other in rhyming slang, and maybe the lanes of our great villages as well, come to that. Just as the English suspect that when they go into a Welsh pub, everyone in there switches immediately from English to Welsh, so Americans have a vague suspicion that when they wander into a group of Britons, they will immediately start conversing in rhyming slang, not so much to avoid being understood by the Americans as to seem a bit more colourful and add a bit of zest to their humdrum tourist existence.

If this is so, and I am sure it is, it is about time that American visitors were given some help in this matter. And that is why

today I am addressing myself to American readers who wish to have a quick and easy entrée into rhyming slang. Yes, it is quick. Yes, it is easy. All you have to remember is two basic things.

1. The people who speak rhyming slang often don't know what they're talking about either.

2. This is because the word they use doesn't rhyme with the real meaning. It's the word they DON'T use which rhymes with the real meaning. A "tizer" is a hat, because "hat" rhymes with "tar", which is the missing bit of "tizer tar". OK?

Now, rhyming slang changes and develops a lot over the years, with new words constantly coming in and old ones going out. A "Ruby Murray" or "Ruby" used to be slang for "curry", but that one has faded now, because the memory of Ruby Murray has faded. "Jimmy Wilde", going even fur-

ther back, was "mild", as in mild beer, but not many people remember Jimmy Wilde, and not many people, I'm afraid to say, remember mild beer. But new phrases are constantly coming into the language, based on new celebrities and new institutions.

For instance, you may hear someone say, "I'm going down the road for a quick Basil", and you may think in your innocence that they are going to buy the herb of the same name. Not at all. He is going down the road for a balti meal. Balti rhymes with Fawlty, and Fawlty therefore means a balti meal. Drop off the Fawlty and you've got a Basil!

This will tend to confuse you if you have never heard of Basil Fawlty or, indeed, if bald cooling has not yet reached the USA. Similarly, if you have never heard of some of our politicians you may be confused by such phrases as "I'm going to Mandy's

place", which means "I'm going home". "Mandy" is a nickname for a politician called Peter Mandelson, who has been put in charge of building a dome to celebrate the Millennium. So "Mandy's place" is "Mandy's Dome" which rhymes with home.

Getting there? Here are a few more. Wallace – vomit (Wallace and Grommet) in "I feel awful, I think I'm going to have a Wallace")

Edna – drink (Edna Everage – beverage)

Perrier'd – fed up (Perrier award – bored) Cut – go (Cut and blow)

Kiwi – suit (kiwi fruit – "Smart do tonight, so I'll put on my kiwi")

Parked – died (park and ride)

Drophead – hairpiece (Drophead coupe – toupee; which is quite neat, when you think that drophead almost means toupee anyway)

Paul – curtain (Paul Merton – "Pull the pauls")

Angus – Satan (after Angus Deayton; nothing to do with rhyming with Hislop, so far as I know)

Trevor – hamburger (Trevor Macdonald)

Michael – fioe (Michael Heseltine; as in "I thought I was going to be sent down but they let me off with a Michael")

Barry – commissioner (Barry Norman – doorman)

So, remember: if you hear any of these phrases in your neck of the woods this summer, it's probably an American visitor...



Alternative medicine

Sir: Professor Edzard Ernst has injected some much-needed sense into the prevalent enthusiasm for all kinds of unconventional medicine, but his is very much a minority voice ("Hidden truths behind healing hands", 2 June).

I have spent almost a quarter of a century as a conventionally qualified doctor practising two forms of complementary medicine, acupuncture and homoeopathy, within the NHS. I have always felt it was an important part of the job to tell patients what could and could not be achieved by unconventional means. This task has become much harder recently, as uncritical optimism has been fostered by a vocal army of enthusiasts with little real understanding of the issues involved.

It is very difficult to publish books or articles which are in any way critical of complementary medicine; the message is not one that most people want to hear. Professor Ernst's article was a welcome exception.

Dr ANTHONY CAMPBELL
London NW4

Sir: Professor Ernst bemoans the lack of clinical studies on the effectiveness of various complementary therapies and describes chiropractic as unproven. He omits to mention that chiropractic is the only complementary therapy in the UK to have undergone any thorough evaluation by an independent medical research body (the Medical Research Council), who published two studies in the *British Medical Journal* in 1990 and 1995.

The results of both studies could hardly have been more positive about the benefits of chiropractic treatment, compared with orthodox medicine, for patients with low back pain.

The 1990 study concluded that chiropractic treatment had been significantly more successful in providing faster pain relief, greater patient satisfaction and measurably greater improvements (for example, only 21 per cent of the chiropractic patients required time off work compared with 39 per cent of the medical patients). A follow-up study in 1995 showed that 30 per cent few-

er of the chiropractic group had experienced relapses of their original low back pain. The MRC concluded that chiropractic to be available on the NHS the potential savings would be huge.

Professor Ernst also suggests that chiropractic manipulation is potentially dangerous. All medical treatments carry risks. It has been generally accepted (by, amongst others, the Royal College of General Practitioners) that manipulation is very safe when performed by a qualified practitioner.

NEIL AUSTIN
London Chiropractic Clinic
London W1

Sir: In this heretic of "biased" media coverage of complementary medicine, Professor Ernst seems unaware of his own inevitable bias.

Far from "scientific evaluation" providing an objective and disinterested means of clarifying the relative efficacy of "scientific" and "complementary" medicine, such a methodology, steeped as it is in the ideologies of modern technocratic science, is itself just as culturally relative as are the complementary approaches which embrace a world-view which may well be incompatible with that of modern empirical science.

Inductively derived "ancient wisdom" (which are crucially different from Ernst's principal target, "anecdotal evidence"), distilled over millennia of real human trial-and-error experience, are at least as likely to provide reliable evidence as are the mechanistic methods of modern science.

Dr RICHARD HOUSE
Norwich

Sir: I practise Shiatsu, one of the therapies for which, as Professor Ernst rightly points out, virtually no clinical trials have been carried out, and I entirely agree with his call for rigorous research.

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

In the meantime, how can I ensure that my clients are getting value for money? First, I ask them some detailed questions about their health problem and how it affects them. Second, I ask how they would know if their problem was to improve. Third, I check carefully by session by session that it is improving. Fourth, if it isn't improving in any way, I will happily give them their money back. Fair enough?

NICHOLAS POLE
London NW8

Power and clean air

Sir: In your report "Power pollution linked to asthma" (27 May) you say that, according to research by the Atmospheric Particles Expert Group (APEG), power stations may be a major source of particulate air pollution. I would point out that APEG has not yet finalised the conclusions of its research and a preliminary draft report is not expected to be circulated for peer review until July. It is not possible therefore to comment on details of the research at this stage.

The Government's Digest of Environmental Statistics shows that road transport is responsible for about twice as much fine particulate emissions (known as PM₁₀) as power stations, and other industry for about three times as much. Coal- and oil-burning power stations are mostly remote from urban areas and do not normally contribute significantly to urban "particle pollution episodes". The electricity industry's own research indicates that the maximum PM₁₀ concentration downwind of a 200MW coal station is well within the Government's air quality objective for 2005.

However, the electricity generators are far from complacent about their emissions. PM₁₀ and other emissions have all fallen substantially in recent years, with the switch from coal to gas, with improvements to dust capture plant and the installation of flue gas

desulphurisation plant, and further reductions are expected.

PHILIP DAUBENY
Chief Executive
Electricity Association
London SW1

Plight of the Bushmen

Sir: Caitlin Davies' difficulties in Botswana, following her concern at the forced removal of the Bushmen from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR), should come as no surprise to seasoned observers of Botswana ("Botswana drops case against British journalist", 26 May).

Survival has been campaigning for the land rights of the Botswana Bushmen for 10 years now. In that time the government of Botswana has exhibited a marked reluctance to acknowledge the rights of the Bushmen to their land and way of life. When the government started the eviction of the Bushmen from the CKGR, it assured its critics that no one would be forced to move. Yet force and coercion was used to move some 600 people. Now only 200 to 400 still remain inside the CKGR, resolute in their refusal to leave.

Though it has a reputation for being an open, democratic country, Botswana remains a place where the persecution and marginalisation of the Bushmen is a day-to-day reality. RICHARD GARSIDE
Press Officer, Survival
London WC1

New council, old names

Sir: The arts world waits for Chris Smith to announce the names of the "new" Arts Council. I fear the list is likely to exacerbate the divide between the arts community and the Council.

For all the talk of a brand new body, one hears of many people being invited to apply including members of the old council, one of whom has already served 11 consecutive years.

My fear now is that some art forms will continue to be represented on Council by the people who have been chairing them for years and who have formulated their policies, and others will have no voice at all.

Dance, touring, drama, combined arts and the visual arts may all find themselves lacking a seat on Council and thus seriously disadvantaged in the competition for funds. All previous art-form chairs should be invited to sit – or one.

STEPHEN PHILLIPS
Hallsham,
East Sussex

The writer is Arts Council Chair of Touring

Ulster deal

Sir: Since the two main stumbling blocks to agreement in Northern Ireland would appear to be the release of terrorists and the decommissioning of arms, why not make one contingent on the other – for each hatch handed in by either side, one prisoner would be let out.

JOHN A DAVIS
Cambridge

Could do better

Sir: The A-levels exam period will soon bring floods of articles about declining standards among the candidates. May I get there first by suggesting the examiners are no better? This question was from the Oxford and Cambridge examining board's English literature paper: *Discuss the Shakespeare's dramatic presentation of justice and mercy in this passage*.

EMMA KING
Thurton,
Norfolk

Rhyme with no reason – an American visitor's guide to that quaint British slang



MILES KINGTON

THE THING that really separates the British from the Americans is our use of rhyming slang. As all Americans know, the streets of our great cities are full of Cockney people speaking to each other in rhyming slang, and maybe the lanes of our great villages as well, come to that. Just as the English suspect that when they go into a Welsh pub, everyone in there switches immediately from English to Welsh, so Americans have a vague suspicion that when they wander into a group of Britons, they will immediately start conversing in rhyming slang, not so much to avoid being understood by the Americans as to seem a bit more colourful and add a bit of zest to their humdrum tourist existence.

If this is so, and I am sure it is, it is about time that American visitors were given some help in this matter. And that is why

today I am addressing myself to American readers who wish to have a quick and easy entrée into rhyming slang. Yes, it is quick. Yes, it is easy. All you have to remember is two basic things.

1. The people who speak rhyming slang often don't know what they're talking about either.

2. This is because the word they use doesn't rhyme with the real meaning. It's the word they DON'T use which rhymes with the real meaning. A "tizer" is a hat, because "hat" rhymes with "tar", which is the missing bit of "tizer tar". OK?

Now, rhyming slang changes and develops a lot over the years, with new words constantly coming in and old ones going out. A "Ruby Murray" or "Ruby" used to be slang for "curry", but that one has faded now, because the memory of Ruby Murray has faded. "Jimmy Wilde", going even fur-

ther back, was "mild", as in mild beer, but not many people remember Jimmy Wilde, and not many people, I'm afraid to say, remember mild beer. But new phrases are constantly coming into the language, based on new celebrities and new institutions.

For instance, you may hear someone say, "I'm going down the road for a quick Basil", and you may think in your innocence that they are going to buy the herb of the same name. Not at all. He is going down the road for a balti meal. Balti rhymes with Fawlty, and Fawlty therefore means a balti meal. Drop off the Fawlty and you've got a Basil!

This will tend to confuse you if you have never heard of Basil Fawlty or, indeed, if bald cooling has not yet reached the USA. Similarly, if you have never heard of some of our politicians you may be confused by such phrases as "I'm going to Mandy's</p

Machiavelli's finest pupils are Tony Blair and Gordon Brown



DONALD
MACINTYRE

IN *The Prince*, a book which shares with *Das Kapital* the distinction of being one of the most discussed and least read in European literature, Machiavelli has something to say about public spending: too much of it means a ruler "will always use up his resources and he will be obliged, eventually... to burden the people with excessive taxes and do everything possible to raise funds. This will begin to make him hateful to his subjects, and... he will not be much esteemed by anyone."

This is rather a good moderniser's account of what happened to the 1974-79 Labour Government. (Even without adding the words "including calling in the IMF" at the end of the first sentence in the quotation.) It conjures vividly the spectre which haunts Gordon Brown - and for that matter Tony Blair - more than any other. And it certainly summarises why both men thought - and think - that broadly maintaining the austere public spending regime laid down by the previous Tory Chancellor increases rather than decreases their chances of winning the all important second General Election.

The humiliatingly short shrift given to union leaders this week, no! to mention Gordon Brown's studiously orthodox speech in the City, both serve to underline the core belief at both famous Downing Street addresses that Labour's endemic habit of spending first and paying later was part of what makes it the only political party in this century never to have served two full terms.

And as with fiscal policy, so with monetary policy. Don't suppose for a moment that yesterday's increase in interest rates will have been unwelcome to either Brown or Blair. OK, the pound went up again. Yes, manufacturing industry will wince. Sure, some mortgage payers will shudder.

The fact is that both men would have liked the Bank of England to move faster and more sharply towards a rise which the markets could credibly judge to be the last. Brown didn't sacrifice, as his first action in office, the cherished power of politicians to manipulate interest rates for reasons of short term popularity, only to find that the Bank behaved more politically than the politicians.

Indeed there has been audible irritation in parts of Whitehall at those members of the Monetary Policy Committee who stray, for one reason or another, from the narrow remit of counter-inflation policy. This is especially because there is a direct connection between policy on rates and that of spending.

The Government's answer to the Liberal Democrats' complaints about its alleged miserliness is that may need surpluses not for a pre-election war chest but in order to weather a recession, made all the likelier if the Bank turns out to have misjudged things.

Which is another reason for the Chancellor to show extreme prudence. Yes, but within limits. The Chancellor and Prime Minister may not be quite as immune to short term political gratification as they look.

Part of what makes the independence of the Bank of England such a master-stroke is the way in which it has protected the government from bearing the brunt of the attacks over the level of sterling as a result of interest rate rises which both Chancellor and Prime Minister had decided well before the election would be necessary. That rates might have gone up even faster had they had their way only underlines the point; would Labour's poll lead be as high as it if the decisions had been taken at the Treasury?

Ministers have no such protection against criticisms on spending. They may scorn the idea that the poor turnout at the local government elections, and, rather more dramatically, the opinion poll rating of the Scottish National Party, are the result of the Government's fiscal toughness. But they are omens which cannot wholly be ignored. The SNP, beginning a hugely upbeat conference in Perth today, are current favourites to win power in assembly elections only a year away.

So it is just as well that the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review next month will not be as austere as it has looked at times this week. It's already well known that Education and Health will be significant net gainers from this huge Whitehall-wide exercise of setting the priorities for the next three years. The Defence budget, though trimmed, will not yield up all the treasures Brown would have liked it to. But elsewhere there will be some painful losses to compensate for the

The electorate shows little sign of wanting Brown to abandon prudence

gains. Brown already knew last week that he had released some serious money for Frank Dobson and David Blunkett without ditching his precious surpluses.

But they are not alone. Brown's speech, in which he re-emphasised the "golden rule" that public borrowing will be used only for investment, was widely interpreted as essentially negative. But I suspect part of its purpose was subliminally to remind the markets that it will not be a breach of his self imposed discipline if he announces public funds for capital infrastructure investment which could - even if only to a limited and temporary extent - slow the rapid rate at which borrowing is falling. Public transport - of which Wednesday's modest £140m (and rather less modest £3.8bn loan guarantee) for John Prescott's Channel Tunnel Link is likely to be a harbinger - will almost certainly be the main beneficiary.

The war chest jibe assumes that Brown and Blair intend merely to accumulate surpluses until unleashing a controlled spending spree just before the general election. But it is doubtful that they would think that politically wise, even if it were not unduly cynical. The electorate shows little sign of wanting Brown to abandon prudence. But it is ready for a bankable downpayment on the Government's promises. Even Machiavelli would have approved of that.

Clare Short is right - there is more to the Third World than famine



SUZANNE
MOORE

READING aloud a profile of the billionaire super-nerd Bill Gates the other day, I announced to anyone who was listening: "Did you know that Bill Gates is rich enough to give every man, woman and child in the whole world \$9 each?" "So, why doesn't he?" asked my seven-year-old daughter.

It was a good question and not one that I could easily answer. In fact, I find it difficult to explain to my children the vast inequalities they see all round them. "Why is that man sleeping outside?" "Where does he brush his teeth?" "Why is that old lady looking in dustbins?"

I can't explain it to them because I can't explain it to myself, and when images of starving children appear on TV, I often turn away. This is not because I am so sensitive, or have seen too many to care any more, or suffer from that new complaint "compassion fatigue". I find them simply overwhelming, the misery so vast and yet so outside my own experience, that I feel powerless.

Something must be done, but what exactly? Putting a tenner in an envelope seems a futile gesture when famine seems around year after year. Obviously not everyone has the same reaction. Images of hunger spur on all kinds of ordinary people to get something done, to try to help, to reach out to those they will never meet, to feel a common human bond. This is laudable and is why Clare Short's remarks over the appeals for aid in the Sudan have been seen as controversial; callous even. She doesn't care about starving children, whereas others do. Now even caring is competitive; whose hearts bleed more? Clare Short? Unicef? The single mother who pledges what she can ill afford?

Yet the points that Short has made are worth making. Her argument is a complicated one which is seen as somehow tricky in the emotional context of starving babies.

She is concerned in general at the portrayal of developing countries as full of "constant suffering, failure and famine", as always in crisis. She has also been critical of the "mutual parasitism of the media and the fund-raiser" as this can lead to terrible pessimism about the possibility of progress.

None of these arguments are especially new. There has been for some time, especially among the more politicised non-governmental organisations in the development field a growing



Images like this show that Africa is not all about pessimism

Photograph: Jean-Marc Bouju

This wasn't "famine". Indeed, what is going on in Sudan is not classified as famine.

There are measures for this kind of thing, apparently. Basically, Short's message is that throwing money at the problem, however well intended, is not enough. The civil war has meant that the underlying difficulty is not one of resources but of access. This is debatable. Some will argue that not enough money has been promised in the first place. Short is taking a long-term view here and one that also makes it difficult for people to know how to respond.

If the problem is the civil war, then

Giving is often the easiest thing to do. Engaging our heads as well as hearts may be too much.

to be ones of acute crisis. This is what Jonathan Dimbleby has called "the media's preoccupation with the horror of mass starvation".

Certainly, as someone who grew up with pictures of Biafra and Ethiopia, I did not recognise malnutrition when it was in front of my eyes because it did not look the way it was supposed to.

When I travelled around the mountains of Bolivia, the children never cried and were not that thin. Everyone always seemed to be eating, though the food had no goodness in it. Girls of 18 looked as though they were 35 and breast-fed their four-year-olds because it kept them quiet. It was only when I asked what the tiny clay pots were in every market that I began to realise something of what was going on. They were to bury alongside the babies that would have enough food in the next life.

what are we, the citizens of Britain, to do about it? Leave it entirely in the hands of the Government to put political pressure on far-away regimes? This is so abstract compared to the short-term solution of giving money.

However, we need to understand Short's starting point, and again this is not a new one.

While it is easy to be overwhelmed by mass poverty we do in fact know how to reduce it. We know what works.

Investment in health and education, particularly in the education of women, helps lift people out of abject poverty.

We already know about fair trade, human rights and debt relief. We know that sustainability is not some ecological mumbo-jumbo, but the only way forward for economies of the South to grow. Yet we are dogged by pessimism, a sense that problems will always be there because

they have always been there. Short's recent interventions have been a way of trying to inject some optimism into the whole process of saying "Let's generate the political will to do what needs doing".

Short is known for saying sometimes what she should not say and sometimes for saying what has to be said. To talk politics in the face of dying babies may have backfired, but surely her job as a politician is to look at the big picture, not just react to the horrific pictures in a tabloid newspaper?

The debate is really one about what can spur political change.

How do we create the political will to reduce absolute poverty? We can respond when it is already too late and put ourselves on the back for our humanitarian efforts, or we can try to understand the causes of poverty.

Of course, people who work in the field do both. Reporters report, aid agencies run feeding centres, politicians make speeches, and the public remains bewildered even as it weeps over the six o'clock news at so much sorrow.

Short's appeal is simply that we focus a little more on the success stories of development, of those who with great dignity are able to change their lives.

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The secret fear of BBC bosses - we won't miss their shows



GERALD
KAUFMAN

SOMETHING strange happened to me yesterday morning. I turned on Radio 3 just before 8am and, instead of hearing yet another of the pop tunes by George Gershwin or Leonard Bernstein, which these days substitute for challenging music on the BBC's classical

music channel, I heard - the weather forecast.

Normally, the weather forecast on Radio 3 consists of a few mumbled words generally in a Jean Brodsky Scots accent, at the end of the odd disconnected sentences which comprise the Radio 3 news bulletin.

But this was a proper weather forecast, with all kinds of technical stuff about drizzle and high winds.

It was, in fact, as I soon learned to my amazement, the Radio 4 weather forecast. Due to industrial action, Radio 4 and Radio 3 were being merged.

Now, to some people, the loss of the full output of not drizzle but drivel on Radio 4 might be regarded as a deprivation, even a bereavement.

The print journalists who

listen to their stories of that morning being regurgitated - generally in three-minute capsules - on the Today show or the World at One (prior to those journalists then regurgitating the regurgitations in their newspapers' editions the next morning), may feel that interruption of Radio 4's full schedule is snatching their livelihood away from them.

Those denizens of middle England why rely on Radio 4 for their information about the state of the body politic may be rendered tongue-tied during coffee breaks in the common rooms of minor universities. They may even have to think up opinions for themselves.

Alastair Campbell (whom God protect) with one fewer target to rage or snarl at, may

instead, I read the New Yorker over my cornflakes.

The predominant majority of the population do not listen to Radio 4's flagship programmes because they do not even know they exist. Quite a lot of people are unaware that there even is a Radio 4. Some, heaven forbid, may not even be aware of the existence of John Humphrys. Their lives proceed in comparative tranquillity without Radio 4 so much as impinging on their consciousness.

The BBC strike, far from causing inconvenience to most of the public, will not even be noticed by the great mass of the population. That is really why the Broadcasting House bosses are so upset by this industrial action. Their secret fear is that

even more people will get used to doing without the BBC's allegedly indispensable core services.

and that the justification for the regretted poll tax known as the licence will diminish further.

As for me, I would like to think that this desirable trend would continue and, indeed, accelerate. Why not merge not only Radio 3 and Radio 4, but Radio 1, Radio 2 and Radio 5 (alive or dead) as well? That would reduce, exponentially, the scope for broadcasting stream-of-consciousness tosh of all kinds. It would cut the BBC down to size. Sounds like a topic worth discussing on the Today programme.

The author is Labour MP for Manchester, Gorton.

Badgering on

"Norman Lamont is after my job," according to Tony Blair's leader Edward McMillan-Scott, as reported in Wednesday's *Daily Telegraph*. "Not helpful," was the Boy Wonder's response to this accusation. "Not true," was former Tory MP Lamont's riposte.

But what is true is that Lamont would like to become a leading Eurosceptic MP in Strasbourg. The problem is finding somewhere in this country that will elect to send him off to the land of champagne and odd cigarettes.

Pandora has learned that Lamont, whose former seat was Harrogate and Knaresborough in Yorkshire and who claims northern roots, believes the North East is his best bet. A call to the Tory campaign office in the

Yorkshire region produced the news that six out of seven of the Conservative prospective candidates have now been selected. Pandora was told that the candidate in the seventh slot "has little chance of succeeding" in an election that will be based on Proportional Representation. Sounds perfect for Norman.

At the Opera Terrace restaurant in Covent Garden earlier this week, Labour's "New Deal" employment scheme was on proud show. Kim Howells, Under Secretary of State for Education & Employment, shook hands with the fledgling chefs whose jobs have been underwritten by the scheme. The mood of gaiety egalitarianism only lasted until lunch

PANDORA

began. At that point, "big fish" and "little" fish were separated, with the Government VIPs sitting down to three courses while the lowly trainees tucked into just one plate. New Deal? Big deal.

Stop action

The BBC's fly-on-the-wall series *The Human Body* looks sure to stimulate at least one part of its audience's anatomy: lots of eyebrows will be raised. The climactic episode won't be screened until later in June when the cameras record a dying man's last moments. Pandora was intrigued by the inherent production scheduling

problems. How could the camera crew be sure that they would not miss some of the most controversial footage ever screened on British TV? BBC press officer Susanna Fray was suspicious when asked to explain. "As if we need any more publicity," she complained. But she did reveal that the corpse in question, Herbert Mowes, had been a particularly co-operative subject. On the fatal morning, he told his wife that he believed his time had come. The crew were summoned, set up their equipment around his bed and departed, leaving the cameras rolling. Thus was death demystified and with some degree of privacy.

Presley lives

Lisa Marie Presley has just signed a deal to record her first album of

songs. The record company is Java Records, in a co-production with Capitol, and is owned by a man, Glen Ballard, who has in the past produced angst queen Alanis Morissette and co-wrote Michael Jackson's "Man in the Mirror".

"Lisa will make an artistic statement that is unique and compelling," Ballard said in a statement announcing the deal. He must see something everyone else has heretofore missed, for Lisa Marie's former husband, Jackie, pulled every string in his professional quiver trying to obtain a recording contract for her.

When you consider a record by Elvis's daughter is sure to sell to fans on novelty value alone, it seems bizarre that her debut has been so long in coming. Can't wait to hear it. Pandora is sure The King would be proud of his princess.

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Bank under fire over rate shock

City economists and exporters condemn quarter-point rise

By Lea Paterson

THIS BANK OF England's surprise decision yesterday to increase rates by 0.25 per cent prompted share price falls and drew fire from both industry figures and the bulk of City economists.

The blue-chip FTSE 100 share index fell by 50 points after the Bank raised rates from 7.25 per cent to 7.5 per cent, but regained some of its losses later in the day to close down 37.6 points at 5860.8.

The pound shot up by almost 2 pence immediately following the announcement, but slipped in late trading to finish the day at DM2.898, down 0.45 pence.

The Bank's move coincided with the publication of two separate studies suggesting the economy was continuing to slow.

City economists had been predicting the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) - joined for the first time this month by John Vickers, the Bank's new chief economist - would leave interest rates unchanged for the seventh successive month. Most - but not all - City economists were critical of the surprise interest rate hike, saying it could lead to a "hard landing" for the economy.

The Bank justified its decision by evidence of a rise in the rate of private sector earnings as well as the sterling's relative weakness in recent months. In a statement, the Bank said: "Inflationary pressures appear greater than in the May projection, and the need for a slowdown in domestic demand

growth has become more pressing."

Simon Briscoe at Nikko Europe said: "The MPC confounded market opinion and logic by raising rates this month. It is a rate rise that the Bank could regret in the months ahead if the economy slows sharply."

Mr Briscoe's view was shared by Richard Taylor, deputy chief economist at the Royal Bank of Scotland, who called the rise "unexpected and unnecessary". Mr Taylor said: "The risk of this strategy is that it may rekindle interest in sterling and bring further misery for manufacturing industry."

Ciaran Barr, senior UK economist at Deutsche Bank, was among those in the City who approved. He said: "The justification for raising rates was a valid one." However, Mr Barr said MPC members could have done more to prepare the City for a possibility of a rate rise, perhaps by injecting a more "hawkish" tone into recent public speeches. "Taking the markets by surprise will have won the Bank few friends," commented Mr Barr.

The decision prompted angry reactions from UK manufacturers. The strong pound has tipped manufacturing into recession, and many economists believe yesterday's rate rise will prolong sterling's strength. Ian Campbell, director general of the Institute of Export, said the rate rise was "a slap in the face for the UK's exporters."

Neither the detailed reasoning behind the Bank's deci-



The Monetary Policy Committee gathers yesterday before deciding to raise rates

Photograph: John Voss

sion nor the voting record of the nine MPC members will be known for another six weeks, when the minutes of the meeting are published. However, this did not stop intense market speculation about the identity of the "hawks" on the committee who voted for a rate rise.

The voting behaviour of John Vickers, who joined the MPC this week, prompted the most comment. Mr Vickers, a former Oxford University professor renowned more for his regulatory expertise than his views on monetary policy, is widely believed to have voted for a rate rise.

Economists at Nikko Europe said: "We would guess that new boy Vickers voted for a rise:

as chief economist he probably has sympathies with the Bank's economists' concerns about earnings growth and sterling weakness." Speculation also focused on Professor Charles Goodhart, a former hawk who became a dove in April.

In evidence to the Treasury Select Committee last month, Professor Goodhart said he had switched sides because of weaker than expected earnings growth as well as the appreciation of the exchange rate earlier this year.

However, in recent months, the trends on both average earnings - one of the key indicators for the MPC - and exchange rates have been reversed, prompting specula-

tion that Professor Goodhart could have once again sided with the hawks.

Average earnings in January rose 4.5 per cent, far more than expected, although the Office for National Statistics has said at least some of the rise is attributable to one-off effects such as bonus payments.

If both Mr Vickers and Professor Goodhart voted for a rate hike, and assuming the three MPC members who wanted a rate rise in April again sided with the hawks, the MPC would have voted five to four in favour of a rate rise.

Some economists speculated that the minutes of the meeting - due to be published on 15 July - could reveal that as

many as eight of the nine MPC members voted for a rate rise.

One said: "Eddie George may not have been comfortable finding himself in the minority. If he switched to the hawks, the rest of Bank staff may have voted with him." In April, Mr George, Governor of the Bank of England, voted to keep rates on hold, as did David Clementi, deputy governor, Ian Plenderleith, executive director of the Bank, Professor Goodhart and DeAnna Julius, former chief economist at British Airways.

Mervyn King, deputy Bank governor, Sir Alan Budd and Professor Willem Buiter voted to raise rates.

The Bank's decision coincided with the publication of

the latest CBI distributive trades survey and the 31st "Enterprise Barometer".

The CBI survey showed that although growth in annual retail sales volumes held up in May, the underlying trend in sales growth was still relatively weak. Sudhir Jimankar, CBI's associate director of economic analysis, said: "The survey suggests that retailers do not expect their prices to pick up any further, which is good news for the inflation outlook".

The survey by 3i, the venture capital group, showed falling confidence in the independent business sector, with manufacturers more gloomy than providers of services.

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THE REACTION

Cosworth
sale aids VW
in Rolls fight

1,500 more go at Pilkington

By Peter Thal Larsen



Paolo Scaroni: Says the cuts will lift productivity

PILKINGTON, the troubled glass-maker, plans to sack another 1,500 workers in the coming 12 months in an attempt to restore its fortunes.

The move will take the total number of jobs lost as part of the restructuring package, announced last autumn, to 7,500. About 400 jobs will be lost in Australia while the rest will fall in Europe. Paolo Scaroni, Pilkington's chief executive, said yesterday.

He said the move would help reduce costs in the group's float glass manufacturing plants, lifting productivity levels to those of its nearest competitors.

"If you are not competitive in float you die," Mr Scaroni said, pointing out that the planned cuts would lift Pilkington's productivity per worker. "If we can achieve that we will be as good as our competitors. We will be in the pack."

He said that the company had already shed 3,500 of its workforce as part of plans it announced last autumn. The remainder of the jobs will go in the coming year.

The additional cuts raised the amount that Pilkington had to set aside for restructuring from £194m to £225m. The

Railtrack demands charges deal to finish Tunnel link

By Michael Harrison

RAILTRACK dropped a bombshell on the Government yesterday by warning that it was unlikely to build both phases of the £5.5bn Channel Tunnel Rail Link if the forthcoming review of its rail access charges proved too harsh.

The warning came just 24 hours after the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, struck an agreement with Railtrack to rescue the 68-mile link and cast fresh doubt on whether construction of the line all the way into London's St Pancras station would be completed.

Railtrack has agreed to build and then acquire the first

phase of the link to Fawkham Junction in Kent for £1.5bn. But its chief executive Gerald Corbett said the option to complete the second stage into London at a cost of £1.5bn would be contingent on the outcome of the regulatory review into its charging formula from 2001 onwards.

Mr Corbett denied that this was tantamount to blackmailing the Government and the Rail Regulator John Swift. "It is not blackmail at all. It is prudent financial management," he said.

Railtrack's financial director, Norman Broadhurst, added that if the Rail Regulator "decided to do a British Gas

on us" then it would have to relinquish the second phase and concentrate on its core business.

Railtrack will argue that the forthcoming review of charges, covering a five-year period from 2001, must not be any harsher or it will not be able to afford its investment programme, now £1.45bn a year.

Under Railtrack's current pricing formula, the charges it levies on train operating companies for access to the rail network must fall by 2 per cent a year in real terms. Railtrack has easily met this target while making increased profits. Last

year profits rose 12 per cent to £385m on access charges of £2.1bn.

Railtrack will argue that the forthcoming review of charges, covering a five-year period from 2001, must not be any harsher or it will not be able to afford its investment programme, now £1.45bn a year.

Railtrack's access charges from Eurostar services are currently running at £35m a year but they will rise to about £120m a year when the first phase of the high-speed link enters service in 2003 and to about £330m once the line is complete into central London.

Outlook, page 23

BTG plans £400m float for car transmission unit

By Trevor Webster

BTG, which was privatised in 1995 to develop and market new technologies as a quoted company, is planning to unlock a significant part of its future value for shareholders by demerging and floating off its most valuable business, Torotrak, on the stock market this summer.

Torotrak is likely to be valued around £400m on the strength of its revolutionary new automatic car transmission system, which can cut fuel consumption by 20 per cent and make a serious impact on exhaust emissions. It has already been licensed to seven of the world's biggest vehicle manufacturers, including Toyota and Ford, and also has five development contracts.

Together the 12 agreements cover 40 per cent of world production of transmission units.

With BTG's stock market value around £645m and City analysts estimating Torotrak to be around 55 per cent of the total business, news of the float immediately unlocked some value for shareholders yesterday. BTG shares shot up 33.5p to 736p.

BTG shareholders will receive one Torotrak share for each share they hold in the parent company and the group will simultaneously raise £50m through an issue of new shares to allow Torotrak to carry its development to the production stage by the year 2000, and hopefully to profitability around 2003.

BTG will keep a share of under 10 per cent, comprising a share stake and a share of future revenues.

Torotrak's board has already been beefed up with a new board headed by ex-General Motors executive David Wallis as chairman, with a finance director, product engineering director and three non-executives. The demerger documents will be published in a fortnight's time and share dealings in Torotrak should start on 14 July.

News of the Torotrak flotation came as BTG published results for the year to March showing a rise in losses from £2.7m to £9m, due to lower revenues from its magnetic resonance imaging system and the Pyrethrin insecticide, plus increased development spending on Torotrak.

Investment column, page 24

EU pressed to investigate Eurostar

By Michael Harrison

THE consortium selected by the Government to take over Eurostar services to Paris and Brussels faces an anti-trust investigation by European Commission competition authorities.

Easyjet, the low-cost airline, is set to file a complaint alleging that the consortium, headed by British Airways and the coach group National Express, will unfairly dominate the travel market between

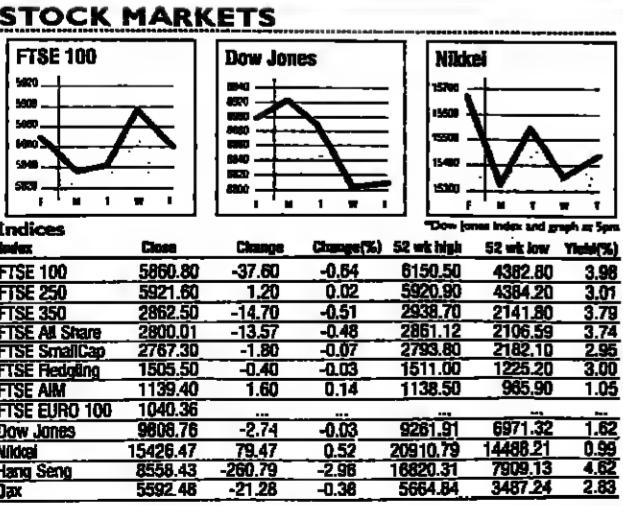
London, Paris and Brussels. "Allowing British Airways to run Eurostar is like putting Herod in charge of a kindergarten," Easyjet said in a statement yesterday.

Virgin claims that BA and National Express will have an "economic interest" in 90 per cent of the market, which is estimated at 15 million passengers a year. BA is the biggest single airline operator between London and Paris with an estimated 40 per cent of the market,

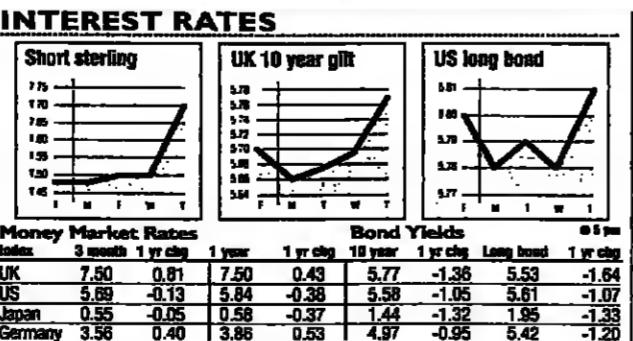
National Express officials were cautious about whether the selection of the Eurostar consortium would harm fair competition.

Yesterday in the markets

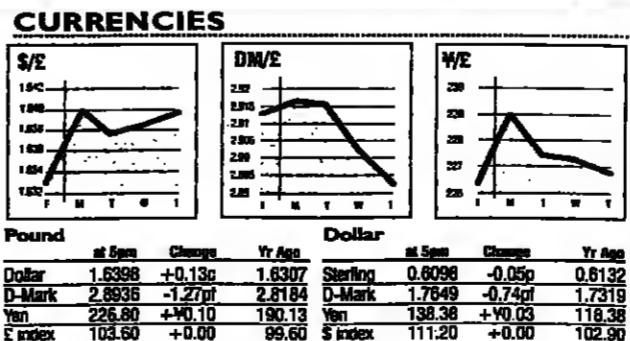
STOCK MARKETS



INTEREST RATES



CURRENCIES



OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Class	Cap	Chg	% Chg	Yr Ago	Indx	Clse	Yr Ago	Indx
Falls	Price (\$)	Div (\$)	% Chg						
Vaux Group	345.00	43.50	14.45	4.2%					
Grenfell Group	521.50	28.00	6.57	4.2%					
Falls	Price (\$)	Div (\$)	% Chg						
Railtrack GPF	138								

لماذا من الأصل



OUTLOOK ON THE CHORUS OF COMPLAINT ABOUT THE BASE RATE RISE, BRITAIN'S PLACE IN THE ECONOMIC LEAGUE TABLES, AND THE HIDDEN EXTRAS IN THE RAIL LINK RESCUE

IT HAS taken them six months longer than it should have, but the Monetary Policy Committee has finally plucked up the courage to increase borrowing costs in the face of the near-united opposition of industry, unions, politicians and more than half the City. The degree of complaint yesterday was out of all proportion to the impact a quarter-point rate rise will have on the economy.

This almost certainly reflected the shock of any upward move at all, given that none was expected after last month's exceptionally dovish Inflation Report. After all, the MPC took no action after February's hawkish report. Many in the City will therefore have been caught out in the futures market.

Yet, as the Bank has been careful to point out over and over again, the policy decision has remained finely balanced. Since January the balance, for the committee, has tilted towards inaction. This month it tilted the other way, prompting the MPC to make a pre-emptive move against pay pressures and a domestic economy that remains robust despite signs of impeding slowdown.

The fascinating question for Bank-watchers is exactly how that balance was reflected in the votes on the committee. Most leapt to the conclusion that Charles Goodhart changed his mind back to favouring a rate rise because of the latest disappointing earnings figures, and that the new kid on the block, John Vickers, turned out to be a hawk too.

If so, the professors outvoted the rest – with Eddie George in the minority group.

But it is hard to imagine the Governor would want to find himself on the losing side of a vote, and he might have changed his mind too.

Whatever the voting arithmetic, yesterday's small move will not have a big direct impact on the economy. Its indirect effects will depend on how sterling reacts over the next few days rather than the first few minutes. Once over the initial shock, the markets might yet conclude that UK interest rates have now peaked. They might even decide the Bank's hawks are right about medium-term inflationary dangers.

And while life is no picnic for manufacturers, other less vocal parts of the economy are slowing only very gently. Some sectors, like IT and construction, are sure to boom until the millennium. A quarter-point rate rise will not be enough to make the difference between a soft landing and a hard one for the economy but, with luck, make the difference between missing the inflation target and hitting it.

Are we really that competitive?

MANY ARE going to find it hard to take seriously a competitiveness league table which ranks the economies of Malaysia and Thailand above those of France, Germany, Spain and Italy. Did on the capital markets rather decisively vote these former tiger economies as rotten in the core in the Far Eastern meltdown of last year, or was that all just an aberration?

However, provided you accept the

World Economic Forum's annual Global Competitiveness Report, the latest edition of which was published yesterday, for what it is, then its findings are not unusual addition to the legion of competing international economic assessments that struggle for attention each year. The WEF report doesn't pretend to be a conventional assessment of what is happening in economies around the world. Instead it attempts to assess their potential for growth and prosperity. Rather pleasingly, the UK has in recent years soared up the league table, rising from seventh place to fourth in the last year alone.

That puts us way ahead of many conventionally strong economies – notably Japan and Germany. Instead, we are up there with the turbo-charged US economy and, er, rather less gloriously, with Hong Kong and Singapore. The factors that make us so are largely down to the labour and capital market reforms of the Thatcherite years. Countries like Germany and France score highly on infrastructure, technology and management, but they score poorly on labour flexibility and government policy. The more open and free market orientated an economy, the more likely it is to gain a high ranking in the WEF survey.

Rather less weight is given to the great German economic attributes – high levels of productivity and manufacturing capability – than perhaps ought to be. The WEF survey, for instance, is a total contrast to the one commissioned by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, which showed British levels of productivity seriously trail-

ing those of Germany and France, not just in manufacturing, but in the service sectors too. Furthermore, if Britain is truly as competitive as the WEF rankings make out, then our exchange rate, even at 3 marks to the pound and higher, could hardly be viewed as a gross overvaluation. Few people in British industry would agree with that thesis.

The real importance of the WEF survey, however, is that it probably reflects international business perceptions of what makes for a healthy economy better than any other. The competitiveness rankings incorporate a survey of senior executives from around the world and they almost without exception rate us very highly.

Perceptions are often very different from reality, of course, but don't knock it; as every job hunter knows, it is as important to be thought of as a desirable property as actually to be one. Gordon Brown, who has a tendency to run down the UK economy at every available opportunity, would do well to take a leaf out of his predecessor's book, and trumpet our labour and capital market advantages as much as he can to the international business community. It's worth a fortune in inward investment.

Railtrack springs its trap

THE IRIS, as they say, no such thing as a free lunch. Yesterday John Prescott discovered the hidden extras that come with the bill when you sit down to dine

with Railtrack. The deal to rescue the Channel Tunnel Rail Link already looked a mite generous in its new private developers. They get the benefit of the Government's lower cost of borrowing. And the taxpayer picks up the tab if the CTRL fails to live up to expectations.

Now Railtrack has added another dish to the menu. Without resorting to anything as coarse as blackmail, Railtrack has made it clear that it will only complete the CTRL if it gets an easy ride in the forthcoming review of its access charges.

The Deputy Prime Minister presumably saw this man-trap coming. Even so, Railtrack's chairman Sir Bob Horton has sprung it with impeccable timing. Railtrack will guarantee the first phase of the link to Fawkham Junction in Kent. But it will not have to decide on its option to build the second and more important phase into central London until the new price controls take effect in 2001.

The instinct of all regulators is to look at the efficiency gains made during the initial price control period and then impose a large one-off price cut at the start of the next period to compensate consumers.

If the rail regulator does this, then Railtrack has intimated that the Government will have to find someone else to build the remainder of the link. The alternatives do not look very appetising. Either the Government will be left with a half-built railway line just as it is preparing to go to the polls. Or it will have to settle for a soft set of price controls that could translate into fare increases for the travelling public. Not a choice to relish.

Cosworth sale aids VW in Rolls fight

By Michael Harrison

THE GERMAN car maker Volkswagen yesterday strengthened its hand in the bid battle for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars by clinching a deal to buy Cosworth, the company that supplies engines to the luxury car maker, for £120m in cash.

The deal with Vickers, the parent company of Cosworth and Rolls-Royce, came hours ahead of a shareholders meeting today to approve the £430m sale of Rolls-Royce to VW.

Last night the likelihood of

a rival bid emerging for Rolls-Royce from Crewe Motors, a consortium of enthusiasts, appeared to have faded away.

Cosworth currently manufactures the V8 engine for the two-door Bentley and would become the supplier of V12 engines for the new Rolls-Royce models, the Silver Seraph and the Bentley Arnage, if the VW takeover goes through. Cosworth would also supply high-performance engines for the VW subsidiary Audi.

BMW, which has been vying



Ricardo Rossetti of Brazil in his Cosworth-powered Tyrrell Ford

Mark Thompson/Allsport

with VW for control of Rolls-Royce, has said it will end its contract to supply engines for the two models if Rolls-Royce falls to its German rival.

VW has pledged to quadruple production at Rolls-Royce's Crewe factory and invest at least £300m over the next five years. The deal to buy Cosworth would take VW's total outlay to almost £600m.

Northampton-based Cosworth employs 1,200 workers and made profits of £6m on sales of £117m last year. Apart from Rolls-Royce, it supplies engines to three Formula One teams, including Ford-Tyrell, and engines for Ford rally cars. It also makes cylinder heads for the Jaguar XK8 and engine components for Ford and Perkins.

Sir Colin Chandler, the chairman of Vickers, described the Cosworth deal as "excellent news for all concerned" and said it underlined the case for shareholders to approve the sale of Rolls-Royce to VW. The sale of Cosworth to VW is conditional upon its bid for Rolls-Royce being approved.

The two deals will leave Vickers with just its Challenger tank defence division and a marine propulsion business. Last year these contributed operating profits of £48m on sales of £640m. Group profits were £78m on turnover of £1.1bn.

Michael Shrimpton, the head of Crewe Motors, was maintaining yesterday that its intention was to put a formal bid on the table before Vickers shareholders assemble at 10.00am this morning to vote on VW's offer. Analysts believe its chances of pulling off a suc-

Underwriting group to vanish after 114 years

By Terry Macalister

THE Institute of London Underwriters, whose members wrote the insurance policies on the *Titanic*, is poised to become a casualty itself after 114 years.

The decision to merge with one of the other trade associations is expected to be taken by ILU members on June 24. It highlights growing global competition and increases the pressure on the remaining London insurance market to join forces with Lloyd's.

Officials from the ILU and counterparts from the Lon-

don International Insurance and Reinsurance Market Association (Liiira) argue that a merger between their two bodies would save £2m a year.

They are likely to come together under the new banner of the International Underwriters Association and be based in the London Underwriters Centre where Liiira is located.

The ILU would move out of its own City office block with the name being kept for the time being only for office management functions.

Most of the ILU building is

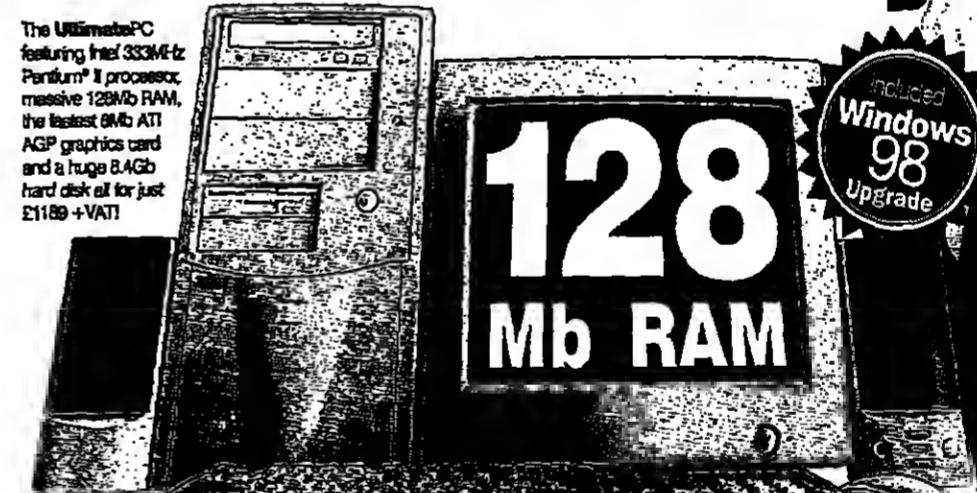
tenanted by some of its 46

members who will remain in place, but around 10 ILU administrative posts are likely to be lost.

Marie-Louise Rossi, chief executive of Liiira, will head the new organisation. The future of the ILU's chief executive, Tony Funnell, remains uncertain.

The ILU is not an underwriter itself but a trade association where 46 companies write marine, aviation and energy risks. It grew up as a company market alongside Lloyd's when the latter was made up entirely of private investors.

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Coverage of Princess's death boosts Daily Mail group

A RUNNING series on Diana, Princess of Wales, provided a one-off boost to the circulation of the *Daily Mail* earlier this year, the paper's owner said yesterday. Daily Mail & General Trust said that a 12-part series on Diana, written by the former royal correspondent Richard Kay, had lifted sales of the *Mail's* Saturday edition by as much as 500,000 copies while it was running. This helped DMGT's national and regional newspaper operations report an 11 per cent jump in turnover to £485m for the year to March. Group turnover was £658m, up from £545m, while pre-tax profits jumped 24 per cent to £81.1m.

ITNET valued at £246m

INFORMATION technology supplier ITNET will be valued at £246m when its shares are placed on the stock market shortly at 350p each. Dealings are expected to start next Friday, 12 June. The pricing of the shares at 350p means the former in-house IT provider of Cadbury Schweppes will raise £125.8m from its placing of 35.9 million shares. It will keep to repay debts and provide funds for investment. ITNET boosted its operating profits from £4.86m to £5.95m in 1997 on a turnover of £81.7m against £68.7m previously.

Credit warning over EMU

A LEADING credit rating agency has warned it could downgrade Belgium and Italy's sovereign debt rating over fears that European Monetary Union (EMU) could precipitate a financial crisis in high debt economies. Fitch IBCA said EMU participants with relatively low debt levels could benefit from a "flight to quality" once all participating Member States are obliged to issue bonds in euros. Bond issues by relatively high debt economies, such as Belgium and Italy, could become less attractive to investors, and this, in turn, "would increase the risks of a financial crisis", the agency said.

Bellwinch agrees bid

BELLWINCH, the South of England housebuilder, has agreed a 30p-a-share bid from rival housebuilder, Kier, which values it at £13.5m. Earlier this week Kier acquired a 23.6 per cent stake in Bellwinch and said it was considering making an offer for the whole company. It has now received undertakings to accept its offer from holders of an additional 37.3 per cent of Bellwinch shares. Kier says the acquisition should be positive for earnings.

US delay for ICI sale

ICI's £277m sale of its Crosfield business to WR Grace, which was announced in April, will be delayed until the third quarter of this year after a request for further information from the US Federal Trade Commission. Both ICI and Grace are confident the deal will be completed.

Vaux responds to bid approach

By Clifford German

THE THREAT of further brewery closures loomed yesterday after Vaux, the Sunderland-based brewer and owner of the Swallow hotel chain, confirmed an unsolicited approach from an unidentified company looking to make an agreed bid.

Its chairman, Sir John Nicholson, repeated his belief in the group's potential and prospects and asked the company's financial advisers, Noble Grossart, to seek further details.

But the group is considered vulnerable to a hostile bid. The recently appointed chief executive, Martin Grant, has yet to join the group and the shares, which have underperformed the stock market heavily over the last two years, jumped 45p to 346.5p.

The most likely bidders are thought to be Stakis and American Patriot, and the main target is almost certainly the hotels, which have performed strongly, increasing profits by 14 per cent to £12.1m in the six months to 31 March, and contributed 75 per cent of the group total.

The brewing and pub side of the business has been badly squeezed by the heavy investment by the national brewery chains and the fast-growing pub companies, and could be vulnerable in the event of a break-up. Vaux owns the Ward brewery in Sheffield as well as the Vaux brewery in Sunderland and has a tied estate of 843 pubs, of which 178 are managed.



JOHN YOUNG, chairman of the London brewer Young & Co., toasts a 27 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £6m before reorganisation costs and property sales in the year to 28 March. Turnover rose 3.6 per cent to £78.56m. The dividend is up 5.6 per cent to 16.05p.

Springer eyes UK market

By Peter Thal Larsen

AXEL SPRINGER, the German newspaper publisher which is lining up a bid for Mirror Group, said yesterday that the UK was the most attractive newspaper market in the world.

"The British newspaper market is the best in Europe, if not in the world," Springer's chief executive, Gud Fischer, said. "I do not want to be the last to go there."

Meanwhile, the group confirmed that it has the financial muscle to launch a bid for Mirror Group by reporting that it was

Hardy prepares to raise £80m

By Terry Macalister

HARDY Oil & Gas yesterday unveiled plans to raise £80m via a rights issue but admitted that plans to spend some of the cash in Pakistan could be hit by sanctions.

Hardy will use the new money to support a £30m spending programme over the next five years, of which £6m is ear-marked for Pakistan.

But nuclear testing by the Islamabad government has led the US to impose a moratorium on multilateral aid. "So far none of our business there is covered by sanctions but obviously if the embargo broadens it could affect our investment," said John van der Welle, finance director.

Analysts also expressed fears about how quickly the Pakistan schemes could move ahead. "There are no US partners with Hardy but it could be hard to find banks willing to support such projects," said one.

The small independent has made an exciting gas find on the Sawan concession in Pakistan.

It indicated there could be as much as one to two trillion cubic feet of gas there.

The investment programme is split between Pakistan, Australia and the UK North Sea.

Off Britain, Hardy is busy with the development of the Elgin and Franklin fields.

The company is hoping to

build up further field opportuni-

ties by forming a new joint venture with the US offshore

services giant Halliburton. The

two partners plan to deploy a new form of subsea technology, called AlphaPRIME, which, it is said, could cut costs by as much as \$3 per barrel.

But its choice of Halliburton Energy Development as a partner could prove controversial. The US company has won some clients by competing for oil company business. Halliburton has taken equity stakes in the Sangu field alongside Cairn Energy and the Fyne field with Monument Oil & Gas. This has led to accusations that it is competing with customers.

A spokesman for Halliburton admitted he was "aware of this argument" and agreed his company might increase its equity stakes yet further through the joint venture with Hardy.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Alcester Furniture (F)	92.1m (88.1m)	9.92m (8.96m)	19.2p (17.4p)	7.30p (5.4p)
Boots (F)	5.02m (4.57m)	431.1m (571.1m)	29.0p (42.8p)	22.3p (20.5p)
BTG (F)	19.2m (22.5m)	-8.90m (-2.73m)	-10.0p (-3.31p)	0.92p (0.83p)
Dairy Milk & Gen. Trust (F)	1057.8m (1049.0m)	81.1m (85.5m)	46.2p (27.0p)	0.0p (0.0p)
Heinz Bar (S)	214.4m (100.2m)	18.5m (12.0m)	55.6p (31.6p)	0.0p (0.0p)
London Securities (F)	- (-)	0.732m (0.733m)	0.9p (11.0p)	2.0p (2.0p)
London (F)	34.4m (26.1m)	4.9m (3.1m)	10.4p (16.0p)	7.3p (7.0p)
Weston Hills (F)	16.0m (12.8m)	-11.65m (-7.18m)	-42.2p (-59.8p)	n/a
Woolies (F)	10.2m (25.6m)	-9.60m (-0.373m)	-8.6p (-4.1p)	n/a
Personal Number Co. (F)	2.8m (2.7m)	-0.20m (-0.834m)	-1.06p (-10.0p)	n/a
Pilkington (F)	2.707m (2.918m)	-100.0m (77.0m)	-17.4p (0.2p)	5.0p (5.0p)
Power Utility (F)	721.2m (621.4m)	38.1m (29.0m)	30.1p (15.2p)	25.0p (25.0p)
Sedgemoor (F)	67.8m (69.7m)	12.3m (8.13m)	5.4p (3.2p)	1.5p (2.0p)
Savers (F)	39.4m (34.8m)	-6.50m (1.01m)	-8.6p (1.5p)	0.25p (0.1p)
Southern Electric (F)	1.778m (1.780m)	248.7m (255.5m)	5.1p (39.1p)	22.7p (21.5p)
3i (F)	- (-)	124.0m (105.8m)	19.2p (16.0p)	10.3p (9.2p)
TLG (F)	392.9m (383.0m)	24.8m (22.1m)	6.8p (8.0p)	4.6p (4.3p)
Young & Co's Brewery (F)	78.55m (75.80m)	5.881m (5.424m)	30.91p (28.96p)	18.05p (15.20p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim 1 EPS is pre-exceptional *Dividend to be paid as a FD

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY PETER THAL LARSEN

Boots card proves a major advantage

IT IS slightly curious that Boots got so much praise yesterday for the success of its loyalty card. After all, Lord Blyth, Boots' chairman, sat on the fence for ages, while other retailers showed what a piece of plastic could do for their turnover, before finally taking the plunge last September. Judging by the boost the Advantage card delivered to sales for the year to March, it's worth asking why Boots didn't get it on the market earlier.

This criticism aside, there's little doubt that the Advantage card has paid off. In just nine months Boots has issued 8 million of the cards, and over the year to March they accounted for 1.8 per cent of the growth in counter sales at Boots the Chemist. Apart from the profit that the card is generating, Boots also gets a wealth of information on spending patterns that it didn't have before.

The chemists chain remains the jewel in Boots' crown, producing like-for-like sales of more than 5 per cent. The Opticians branches, though a relatively small part of the group, stormed ahead with same store sales rising by a fifth. So it's not surprising to hear that the group is increasing its spending on the Opticians chains, while opening a further 30 superstores this year.

In other retail formats, however, success remains as elusive as ever. Halfords lifted like-for-like sales by just 3 per cent, although selling more own-brand goods helped boost profits by 28 per cent. Trading at DIY chain Do It All continued to be dull, with underlying sales up 6 per cent on a same-store basis. Ironically, the loyalty card has failed to catch on here and has been withdrawn.

Boots was keeping mum on reports that financial investors want to buy Do It All, though it would undoubtedly like to sell. However, Boots' growth – and its share price – will continue to depend on the performance of the chemists chain. On profit forecasts of £620m the shares, up 28.5p to 984p yesterday, trade on a forward multiple of 21. Still good value.

3i seeks high return from small firms

VENTURE capital group 3i has had a good run ever since it floated back in 1994. That's no surprise: the group's unique portfolio of quoted and unquoted companies has produced a compound annual return of 23 per cent over the period. In the year to last March the total return was 22.4 per cent on shareholders' funds – an increase of 56 per cent on the previous year. Total assets rose by 19 per cent to £5.23bn and 3i invested over £1bn for the first time, increasing its UK market share.

That said, more capital is chasing buy-out opportunities, while the UK economy faces a slow-down. Even 3i's own barometer of industrial confidence went negative yesterday, raising the question of whether the group can sustain its performance.

It hopes to do so by concentrating on smaller companies, which have outperformed the top 100 shares since February. It is also focusing on services and technology firms where the prospects look better.

The outlook in Continental Europe, where

Boots: At a glance

Market value: £8.87bn, share price 984p (+28.5p)

Trading record 94 95 96 97 98

Turnover 4.17 4.31 4.12 4.58 5.02

(£bn)

Pre-tax profits 416 650 508 571 432

(£m)

Earnings per share 27.7 55.7 36.6 42.9 29.0

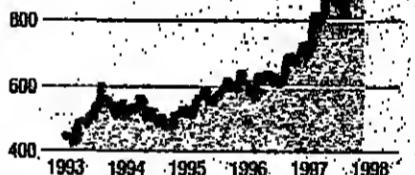
(p)

Dividends per share 15.0 17.0 18.5 20.5 22.3

(p)

Share price

pence



3i invests more than 10 per cent of its funds, also looks bright.

The pace of new investment seems to have slowed slightly since the year-end but the performance of quoted companies since then suggests net asset value may have risen to around £1.5bn. At 655p – up 5p yesterday – 3i shares are above that value. But stockbrokers Kleinwort Benson say the company deserves a premium as manager of £1.3bn of outside money in addition to its own funds. The shares are a strong hold.

Inventive demerger gives BTG a lift

IN DECIDING to spin off Torotrak, its revolutionary transmission system, BTG is following a highly profitable tradition. Previously, privatised companies as diverse as National Grid and British Aerospace have done wonders for shareholders by demerging promising, separate, businesses on to the stock market.

Torotrak highlights the value BTG can squeeze out of technologies. A business on which the group has spent £12m over 10 years will float with a value of close to £400m after raising £50m of new money. Given that the system is already being worked on by 12 of the world's leading car makers, there is plenty of future promise for shareholders.

But what is the rest of BTG worth? It will be left with more than 1,000 other technologies or inventions, including a host of biotech treatments already on the books of drug giants such as SmithKline and Zeneca. Not to mention a revolutionary artificial hip-cup, disposable contact lenses and an electronic bar-coding system.

New revenue is rocketing and BTG should make a profit early in the next century. Still, valuing this collection of inventions is tough. Kleinwort Benson, BTG's broker, reckons the existing portfolio is worth anything from £300m to £2bn, and Torotrak accounts for 55 per cent of the total. It is a wide range, but as yesterday's 34p share-price rise to 736.5p suggested, the demerger lifts the probable value of the portfolio. And the shares still look a better bet than other biotech and "future value" companies. Hold tight for the next millennium.

The HP LaserJet 6P printer is a flexible beast. It's designed both for individuals and small workgroups.

So, as your business staffs up, you won't have to change printer.

Say there are two of you. No problem: the LaserJet 6P has two parallel ports so you can attach two PCs.

And if there are three to five of you? Just attach your 6P to

<http://www2.hp.com/peripherals/mktm.html>

Self-employed pensions could be compulsory

By Andrew Verity

THE Government is considering compelling all the country's self-employed to pay into a second pension as part of its wholesale review of pension policy, it emerged yesterday.

Responding to a report by the independent Pensions Provision Group, the DSS said it was looking at bringing the UK's 3.5 million self-employed into a revamped system of compulsory second pensions.

Harriet Harman, Social Security Secretary, said: "The report reinforces our view that there is a new role for the state in extending second-tier pensions to people who lose out."

A spokesman for her office later confirmed the DSS would consider forcing the self-employed to save by bringing them into the current system for employed people.

Options include compelling the self-employed to take out a "stakeholder pension", the new vehicle being developed as part of the government's reforms. Another option would be to bring some self-employed people within the state earn-

ings-related pension scheme.

In its report published yesterday, the Pensions Provision Group said more and more pensioners would be forced to rely on income support if the Government left the existing pension system unchanged.

All employed people are already compelled to save for a second tier pension – either Serps or a private scheme – through national insurance. But there is no such compulsion for the self-employed.

Tom Ross, chairman of the group, said: "We do question whether that level of compulsion which applies to employees cannot in the long term apply to the self-employed as well." He added it was difficult to defend the exclusion from Serps of the self-employed, who were at greatest risk of poverty in retirement.

Significantly, the group warned against forcing all employees to take out private, second-tier pensions. "The low-paid (and those not in paid work) cannot be expected to provide for themselves. This means that the state has an essential redistributive role. Com-

pulsory private pensions are by no means the whole answer," Mr Ross said.

Most of the UK's self-employed still save nothing for retirement beyond the basic state pension, which now amounts to £64.70 a week for a single person. Personal pensions were not always suitable, the group said.

Peter Murray, chairman of the National Association of Pension Funds, called for all the self-employed to be compelled to join a stakeholder pension. He said they should be made to pay in at least 10 to 15 per cent of earnings above a certain level of income.

"Quite frankly the majority of self-employed people who haven't got a large business to sell are not making any provision at all. That really is a recipe for disaster. It is most important that there is a properly structured system so that they can save for retirement," he said.

The Pensions Provision Group insisted a role for the state was both necessary and affordable, noting that the amount spent on state pensions will dwindle over the next three decades.

The European Central Bank yesterday said Germany's Otmar Issing (above) will become its chief economist, a move analysts believe will help establish credibility at the fledgling institution. Mr Issing, chief economist at the Bundesbank, is expected to bring the German central bank's tough anti-inflation policies to the ECB, which will set interest rates for the 11 countries adopting the single European currency next January. Mr Issing is a firm advocate of basing policy on monetary aggregates. "With Issing in the driver's seat, the ECB stands to get a big boost in credibility," said David Brown, economist at Bear Stearns in London.

Southern might buy power plants from generators

By Terry Macalister

SOUTHERN Electricity, the country's sole remaining independent electricity supplier, yesterday made clear it would be an enthusiastic buyer of any power plants that National Power or PowerGen might be forced to sell.

The chance for Southern to turn itself into a small but significant vertically integrated company comes after speculation the Government will demand the power generators

dispose of 20 per cent of their plant.

Jim Forbes, chief executive, said Southern would not rule out buying other electricity suppliers, generators or water companies but insisted the company could prosper on its own.

A share buyback scheme is also still possible although this is unlikely before July next year.

Southern unveiled full-year pre-tax profits at £248.7m, down from £255.5m, but above analysts' expectations.

La Senza sold for a token £1

By Clifford German

LA SENZA, the loss-making chain of 52 ladies' lingerie shops which listed on the AIM market two years ago at 160p a share, was sold for a song yesterday after Suzy Shor Equities sold its 60 per cent controlling stake for a token £1 to Xunely.

A spokesman for Suzy Shor said yesterday that the sale to Xunely was in the best interests of La Senza, and Xunely had the skills and experience to turn La Senza into profit over time. The group has struggled to establish itself in the UK and announced a £2.9m loss in the

their shares. The Canadian-based company Suzy Shor agreed to sell its stake for a nominal sum in return for an indemnity from Xunely covering £1.9m worth of guarantees on financial leases given by Suzy Shor.

A spokesman for Suzy Shor said yesterday that the sale to Xunely was in the best interests of La Senza, and Xunely had the skills and experience to turn La Senza into profit over time. The group has struggled to establish itself in the UK and announced a £2.9m loss in the

six months to August last year. Three further profit warnings followed for the current year and the share price continued to slide.

In February La Senza's chief executive Joel Teitelbaum confirmed the group was talking to several suitors, who were thought to include Contessa, the Ann Summers lingerie chain and the Tulchan Group, which owns Sock Shop. But talks were discontinued after La Senza management rejected offers from all three companies thought to be worth around 25p a share.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



"ARISE, Sir Simon" ... It can't be too long before Simon Lewis, the suave, eminently spin doctor for Cetrica, bags his knighthood, now that he's set to be the Queen's new spokesman.

Mr Lewis was unavailable for comment yesterday, but I understand from sources close to Buckingham Palace that the shortlist for a new head of communications has been whittled down and Simon's name heads the list.

Who better to "repoxy" the monarchy for the new millennium? According to friends of his in the City, of whom there are many, Simon was already networking like mad whilst reading PPE at Brasenose College, Oxford, in 1978-81. Pals from that period describe him variously as "a terribly nice chap", "a fanatical Arsenal supporter" and "a terrible hypochondriac", in no particular order.

Happily married to Clare and a father of two, our hero resides in Highbury, and goes to the same church as Tony Blair did until the latter's progress to Downing Street. There are even suggestions that Simon shared the services of the future PM's cleaning lady.

Friends and critics alike are united in admiration of Simon's immaculate sense of timing. After a spell working for an American senator, Simon joined British PR firm Shandwick and was seconded to the SDP in its "Gang of Four" phase, when the centrist party looked like it might just achieve power. He then headed SG Warburg's PR effort, leaving before the investment bank fluffed a merger with Morgan Stanley and sold up to SBC.

He then went on to become Lord Alexander's bag-carrier at NatWest, again leaving before the solids hit the ventilation at its ill-fated investment banking arm.

Everything is going swimmingly at Centrica, of course, where Simon now enjoys an enviably gargantuan "package".

But one can't help fearing that Simon's premature departure from his next job at the Palace will swiftly be followed by the declaration of a republic...

SAY WHAT you like about Howard Davies, the pugnacious chairman of the fledgling Financial Services Authority (FSA), but he cer-

tainly knows how to stir it. Mr Davies delivered a typically pungent speech at the London Arena in Docklands yesterday, declaring that London's financial community was expanding eastwards out of its historic boundaries in the Square Mile, and that the City fathers should welcome the new-found popularity of Canary Wharf as a home for financial institutions. The FSA, which was launched officially this week, is itself a recent arrival at Canary Wharf.

The speech should go down like a lead balloon with the Corporation. The City authorities are still smarting from the defection of HSBC, which is relocating over 8,000 employees from around the City to a single new tower block in Canary Wharf. Godfrey Brammer, the veteran property developer, led desperate last minute efforts to put together a rival scheme in the City, but HSBC preferred to go east.

Mr Davies took the opportunity of delivering the inaugural lecture for the Thames Gateway Partnership to rub salt in the wound. "We are coext to be among the pioneers in moving our staff to Canary Wharf", he declared. "I believe the City Corporation is now recognising that the expansion of the City's frontiers eastwards is a sign of the City's success, and not an indication of failure."

Perhaps. But I'm sure the Corporation is keeping a cell ready for Mr Davies in the Tower of London if he ever deigns to venture westward.

THE "shock" rate rise which caught just about everyone on the hop yesterday throws into sharp relief the struggle between the hawks and the doves on the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

Ian Amstet at BT Alex Brown has sought to cast light on the matter by rating the MPC members on their hawkishness on inflation on a scale of one (most opposed to a rate rise) to ten (most in favour of a rise).

Eddie George, the Governor, comes out at 5/10, with Mr Amstet describing him as "tied to the status quo". David Clementi is "not a heavyweight" and his industry contacts "may make him instinctively dovish". He gets 4/10.

Mervyn King is a heavyweight" and scores 7/10. Ian Plenderleath, in contrast, "has spent his career at the bank, and has backed his boss on every occasion." He accordingly gets 5/10.

Alan Budd fears a repeat of the "Lawson Boom", and takes on the mantle of head hawk with a mighty 8/10. Charles Goodhart, LSE professor and sheep farmer, scores 6/10, as does Willem Buiter. Deanne Julius emerges as leading dove with 2/10, and is tipped by Mr Amstet to be the first to call for a rate cut.

Looking at yesterday's decision, she'll have to wait awhile.

Most intriguing is John Vickers, the oew boy on the MPC, whose views on rates are a well kept secret. Mr Amstet suggest that, since he is good chums with Mervyn King, he is more likely to be hawkish than dovish.

Did the new boy swing the vote? We'll have to wait for the publication of the MPC's minutes in six weeks' time.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling	1 month	3 month	Dollar	1 month	3 month	D-Mark	1 month	3 month
UK	10000	26893	26237	0.6209	0.6108	0.6026	0.6455	0.6026	0.6026
Australia	26851	26893	26237	1.6373	1.6377	1.6384	0.9278	1.6373	1.6373
Austria	20354	20318	20246	12413	12401	12405	70330	12413	12413
Belgium	59713	59512	59716	36474	36380	36225	20633	36474	36474
Canada	22027	21970	21905	10956	10930	10925	68975	10956	10956
Denmark	10207	10195	10190	67493	67493	67493	49104	67493	67493
ECU	14694	14654	14571	11660	11772	11200	82035	11660	11660
Finland	67895	67703	67788	53566	53587	53402	34042	53566	53566
France	27041	26943	26843	17649	17649	17649	10768	17649	17649
Germany	28241	28183	28048	19623	19623	19623	12738	19623	19623
Greece	49093	49130	49073	29538	29538	29538	19693	29538	29538
Hong Kong	27208	27171	27138	72500	72500	72500	70588	72500	72500
Iceland	28281	28147	28051	17570	17570	17570	17569	17570	17570
Italy	28483	28437	28315	18932	18932	18932	18932	18932	18932
Japan	22681	22548	22277	16832	16832	16832	16832	16832	16832
Malta	53545	53518	53408	40428	40428	40428	22572	53545	53545
Netherlands	32625	32514	32298	13996	13996	13996	19660	32625	32625
New Zealand	12255	12223	12183	50267	50267	50267	19025	12255	12255
Norway	27170	27129	27129	74235	74235	74235	74047	27170	27170
Portugal	28270	28240	28240	14230	14230	14230	14230	28270	28270
Saudi Arabia	67810	67810	67810	62765	62765	62765	62765	67810	67810
Singapore	27683	27656	27677	15670	15670	15670	15670	27683	27683
Spain	24559	24505	24505	53135	53135	53135	29873	24559	24559
Sweden	12706	12673	12622	72885	72885	72885	72805	12706	12706
Switzerland	24068	23926	23720	14676	14676	14676	14335	24068	24068
US	15889	15889	15889	10000	10000	10000	10566	15889	15889

Bond Yields

Country 3 mth chg 1 yr chg 2 yr chg 5 yr chg 10 yr chg

Australia 0.07 -0.01 0.01 0.02 0.02 0.02

Belgium 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00

Canada 0.25 0.25 0

Oaks ready to fall to Midnight's strike

By Greg Wood

FOR regular readers of the letters column of the *Racing Post*, one particular theme has become very familiar in recent weeks. In plaintive and increasingly desperate tones, correspondents from every corner of Britain had pleaded with Godolphin to run Cape Verdi, the 1,000 Guineas winner, in the Oaks today rather than supplementing her for the Derby tomorrow. This point was argued, you understand, entirely on the grounds of racing tradition, and of concern for the filly's well-being. Any suggestion that juicy ante-post vouchers for the Oaks were lurking in the letter-writers' desk drawers would be thoroughly outrageous.

The campaign did not succeed, although a special prize for ingenuity (and cheek) goes to the punter who suggested that the bookies might simply shift all ante-post bets on Cape Verdi for the Oaks on to the Derby instead. In fact, Fred Done – yes, the bookmaker who paid out on Manchester United a couple of months ago – has agreed to do just that, but if any of the big players follow suit, expect a flying pig to win the Oaks today at least 20 lengths.

This is not simply another example of the risks inherent in betting at long-range, but also something which affects bettors looking for an interest this morning. The bookmakers have

had a considerable result on the Oaks before a single filly has been installed, and the uncertainty over Cape Verdi's destination in recent weeks has also allowed other runners to be shortened on a regular basis. It is not that the value has gone, but rather that there was very little in the first place.

Punters will certainly think twice before backing Bahr, Cape Verdi's stablemate, or the pared-down odds available today. It is true that there was much to admire in her defeat of

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Gee Bee Dream
(Epsom 4-40)
NB: Lift The Offer
(Epsom 5-45)

Midnight Line in the Musidora Stakes at York, but Henry Cecil's filly, who will attempt to give the trainer his third consecutive Oaks today, was the best at the weights.

Trophy Wife has been pur-chased and entered in today's Classic purely to ensure a good place, which should also favour Midnight Line rather than Bahr. The latter's connections were confident after the Musidora that the form would be confirmed at Epsom, but it is hard to share their certainty. There are other dangers, too, notably High And Low, who is certain to stay but may lack a turn of foot, and Cloud Castle, who would have finished a clear

second to Cape Verdi in the Guineas at Newmarket with any sort of a clear run.

Nor is it possible to rule out Tarascon, who may not have the ideal pedigree for a mile and a half, but was not stopping at the end of her victorious run in the Irish 1,000 Guineas. Jamie Spencer, her young – correction, adolescent – rider may lack first-hand experience of Epsom, but he received instruction from the oldest hand of all, Lester Piggott, when the two of them walked the course yesterday.

Anyone who has not taken a fancy price already – such as the 6-1 available about Midnight Line after the Musidora, or the 10-1 about Cloud Castle which vanished a few days ago – should probably sit this race out.

Those who cannot resist, however, the only sensible choice is Midnight Line (4-00).

There is more scope for those seeking value in the Coronation Cup, the second Group One race on the card. Swain, last year's King George winner, is as talented as he is consistent, and came within a mistimed nod of beating Silver Charm in the Dubai World Cup in March. That was a hard race, though, and today's outing is his first since. With the ground not quite as easy as he might like, he is worth avoiding and the one to beat him may be another veteran, Lasso (next best 2-45).

The best betting medium of the day is the 17-runner handicap, simply because several horses with an obvious chance on form – Risque Lady and Young Josh among them – are poorly drawn. Of those drawn low, whose advantage can only be compounded by the presence of front-running Shafad'Or in box two, the choice is between Apache Red and GIFT OF GOLD (nap 3-20), with the latter at a more attractive price.

Derby news yesterday concerned Saratoga Springs, who

has already veered several times between being a probable



Master class: Lester Piggott guides teenager Jamie Spencer around Epsom yesterday

Photograph: George Selwyn

starter and an almost definite non-runner. He now seems sure to take his chance, with Willie Ryan, the Derby winner last year on Benny the Dip, in the saddle. The outsider Pegazit, though, will not be running.

At the other end of the market, Greek Dance continues to shorten, in to 100-30 from 7-2 with William Hill, while Second Empire moved in the opposite direction (3-1 from 4-0) with the same firm. Cape Verdi too is on the drift, out to as much as 5-1 with the Tot.

FORM GUIDE

REGGIE LAZY was hampered in a 7-handicap at York (good) behind Ho Lang (4-00) and further behind and, less surprisingly, in a 6-handicap a week previously made an encouraging seasonal debut to finish 2½ lengths third behind Bill over the frame on his two latest starts for David Ebdon and ran a splendid race last time to finish fourth of 20 in a poor draw beaten 1 length behind Hill Magic at Lingfield (soft). She has won three of her last four races, including her previous three runs at Sandown under Rob Gosling. Double Eclipse put in a poor effort behind him when winning a handicap at Newbury (good) to finish last month by a short head. It is breed to appreciate the extra furlong and still looks well-capped. Al Mabrook made his handicap debut at Kempton last Saturday over the trip (soft), and ran with credit to finish 3 lengths behind Prendergast. His form is improving, and he is a good bet to stay in the 100-30 mark. In a maiden at Lingfield (7 soft, good to firm) last month, Young Josh comes on considerably for his responsiveness when finishing first past the post over today's trip at Goodwood (good to firm) two weeks ago and can go close again today. Richard Hannon's Cavendish gave no cause for encouragement on his reappearance when 10th of 16, but remains a good bet to stay in the 100-30 mark.

SELECTION: Cape Verdi, 6-1 (Cape Verdi, 6-1 City Hobbies, Galileo, King of Kings, 10-1 Contractors, 2-1 Second Empire, 6-1 Saratoga Springs, 25-1 others)

1997: Benny the Dip 8-9 W Ryan 1-1 (Lester Piggott) drawn 8-9 can

2.10 Epsom

HYPERION
4-40 Tonight's Prize
5-10 Enchant
5-45 King Darious
4-00 Bath (nb)

GONG: Good (Penetrovets reading 3.08)

RATINGS: 6-1 outside; 4-1 mid; remainder – Inside

DRAWS ADVANTAGE: High a good selection to 8-9, best for 6-7-8

Left: Lester Piggott, 17-year-old Jamie Spencer in fastest in the country. © Course is S of town, 15 miles from centre of London. Three rail stations serve the course. Epsom (train from Victoria and Waterloo) and the nearer Epsom Downs (Victoria) and Tattenham Corner (Charing Cross and Victoria). **ADMISSION:** Queen's Stand £7 (7 to 21 years-olds £20); Club £22 (7 to 21-year-olds £22); Grandstand £16; Lordship Enclosure £12; Royal Box £25; Royal Box under £7 free all enclosure. **CAR PARK:** London C5, Tattenham EC2, (0181) 251 7225.

LEADING TRAINERS WITH RUNNERS: R. Hannon 12 winners from 70 runners (10%). M. Johnstone 9-12 (25%), J. Dunlop 9-3 (24%), Lord Huntingdon 8-21 (38%), L. Dettori 11-12 (84%), T. Colman 7-8 (23%)

LEADING JOCKEYS: G. Sander 15 winners from 75 rides (20%). Pat Eddery 15-18 (82%), L. Dettori 11-12 (84%), T. Colman 7-8 (23%)

BEST PLACED: 1st TIME: Jazz Club (23).

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Jazz Club (23).

FORM GUIDE

2.10 VODAFONE WOODCOTE STAKES (LISTED) C4

(CLASS A) £25,000 added 2YO 6f

RATINGS

1. 1 QUEENSLAND STAR (10) (Gibby Lloyd) S. Williams 8 10... R. Colclough 10

2. 42 CHAMPER (14) (M Channon) M. Channon 9 9... R. Colclough 10

3. 61 RED DELIGHT (10) (Terry H. Hannon) 9 9... R. Colclough 10

4. 21 SWAIN (10) (P. Eddery) S. Williams 9 10... R. Colclough 10

5. 30 SILVA LEGEND (10) (S. Williams) 9 10... R. Colclough 10

6. 1 ATLANTIC DESTINY (22) (Al Mabrook) M. Johnstone 8 9... D. Holland 10

7. 2 KALIDASA (USA) (29) (F. Sander) P. Chapple-Hens 8 10... R. Colclough 10

8. 7 LADY ANGARRAD (11) (Anthonie Heslop) A. Jones 8 10... R. Colclough 10

9. 8 - deblamed -

BETTING: 4-2 Queenland, Star, 6-1 Red Delight, 4-1 Strike A Blow, 6-1 Kalidasa, 6-1 Red Delight, 6-1 Chamer, Lady Angarrad, 5-1 Sykes Legend

1997: Dancer 8-2 (P. Eddery) drawn 8-8 can

FORM GUIDE

A Royal Academy half-sister to several winners, Atlantic Destiny put up a classy performance on her racecourse debut over this trip at York (good), last month. Travelling to Epsom, she is likely to be a good bet to stay in the 100-30 mark. The unblinked Silvia Legend, a previous promising Newmarket third, the unblinked Queenland, a blinker-free 100-30, and the unblinked Star faced five previous winners when making off to beat Golden Silence a length at Lingfield (soft) last month, and looks to stay in the 100-30 mark. The well-regarded Red Delight improved considerably on his racecourse debut last month, and looks to stay in the 100-30 mark. He should be a good bet to stay in the 100-30 mark. The unblinked Chamer, a 100-30, and the unblinked Lady Angarrad, a blinker-free 100-30, look sure to improve on their first run, but a second place behind Dancer at York (soft) will not be enough. 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Ravenscroft on collision course

YOU might legitimately portray it as rugby's variation on the Rich Man, Poor Man theme, or perhaps repackaged it along the lines of the Tortoise and the Hare. Born within six months of each other in 1970, but time zones apart in terms of their respective sporting impacts, Steve Ravenscroft and Tim Horan go eyeball to eyeball in Brisbane tomorrow in a confrontation that gives the archetypal slow developer a chance to ambush the precocious high achiever.

Horan, first capped against the 1989 All Blacks as a 19-year-old centre with dancing feet and hands of purest gold dust, will make his 57th appearance for the Wallabies when Australia defend the Cook Cup against an unranked, unrated and unfamiliar England outfit at the Suncorp Stadium. He has scored precisely 100 points in a Test career interrupted only by occasional injury and his fellow Queenslanders expect him to add to that tally at the expense of an anonymous journeyman who, back in 1991, was bumbling around with Bradford and Bingley while their blond hero was winning a World Cup winner's medal at Twickenham.

We shall see. According to Philippe Sella, one of few contemporary midfielders with more to show about than Horan, there is more to England's new inside centre than meets the eye. "He has developed his game out of all recognition,"

New England cap confronts the Wallabies' Tim Horan in tomorrow's rugby union Test. Chris Hewett in Brisbane reports

says the Frenchman, who played so successfully alongside Ravenscroft at Saracens last season. "The thing that impresses me about Steve is his error count. It is incredibly low, both in the tackle and in ball retention, which is so important in today's game. He has much to look forward to."

Few Englishmen have looked forward to trial by Horan over the last nine years. Having played an exuberant role in Australia's 40-point dismantling of the old country in the summer of 1991, he proceeded to make the decisive play of a tournament-tight World Cup final 13 weeks later: a perceptive covering pick-up deep in his own 22, a slippery scuttle away from a battalion of English tacklers, a sprinter's spurt down the right touchline and a weighted grubber kick to the corner flag to force the attacking line-out from which Tony Daly smuggled the try that would separate the combatants.

There was another vintage contribution in Sydney last summer, when Phil de Glanville and Nick Greenstock found Horan, filling in at outside-half, too hot to handle. Ravenscroft, a steady Eddie out of the de Glanville mould, will not have been en-

tertained by footage of the torture inflicted on England's midfield that night.

For all that, there is a steely air of determination about Ravenscroft that dovetails nicely with his undetectably slow but persistent rise through the representative ranks. "The only target I've ever set myself is to play to the very limit of my ability," he explained. "It's the only realistic target for any player, in my view. The rest comes from your playing environment, from the quality of the people around you, from the circumstances in which you find yourself performing. In the right surroundings, you always find yourself being stretched. The trick is to keep pace with whatever progress is being achieved in the team context. By definition, if you manage to accomplish that, your own game is moving in the right direction."

Born in Bradford, Ravenscroft lives up to his no-frills inheritance. He played a rugby league at school but took more readily to the 15-man game, so readily indeed that after forcing his way into the England Schools side at 18, he drew a deep breath and headed for Auckland for a few months' real action.

"I played for a North Harbour club called Northcote; Richard Turner, a pretty formidable No 8 who some people might remember laying into Dean Richards during the 1993 Lions tour, was my landlord. The idea was to get a feel of grown-up rugby in the biggest rugby hotbed of them all. North Harbour was just beginning to get into its stride at provincial level – Walter Little was the big name in their midfield – and there was a remarkable intensity about the way players of all levels went about their sport."

Martin Johnson, last year's Lions captain, was playing in King County at the same time and rather like the Leicester lock, Ravenscroft did enough to impress the hard-bitten local judge. He made the North Harbour Under-21 side before flying home, moving to London and joining Saracens. England caps at Under-22 and Student

to him and chairman Cliff Brittle as "Stalinist".

The RFU has responded by setting up a three-man panel to investigate, with Ray Manock, national disciplining officer as chairman, working with former president John Simpson and ex-Middlesex Council representative, Mike Christie.

Cotton said: "It's all part of the dirty-tricks campaign to get rid of Cliff Brittle, whose views and mine coincide on many important matters."

Craig Joines will have the chance to prove his worth when Scotland meet New South Wales tomorrow in Sydney. The 24-year-old wing, who has already been capped 20 times at international level, is relishing the prospect of reclaiming his Test place.

Perth

HYPERION
6.50 Rocket Run 7.20 Tarzan 7.50 Hallelujah Falls
8.20 Now Young Man 8.50 Shining Example
9.20 Heart Of Andante

GOING: Good. Firm.
Run/hand course with sharp turns. Run-in 200yd.
● Course is in Scope Park, 4km N of town on A93. Station 41. ADMISSION: Members £14; Padlock £20 (CPA); disabled B 10p; D 10p; E 10p; F 10p; G 10p; H 10p; I 10p; J 10p; K 10p; L 10p; M 10p; N 10p; O 10p; P 10p; Q 10p; R 10p; S 10p; T 10p; U 10p; V 10p; W 10p; X 10p; Y 10p; Z 10p; FAVOURITES: Out 130-22 (38%). R Johnson 5-10 (50%).
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Mountain Dream (scored, 85%).
LONG DISTANCE TRAVELLERS: None.

6.50 STAKES ASSURED MEETINGS NOVICE HURDLE (£) £3,500 2m 4f 110yds

1 3005- CIRAHYAN MAN (10) J Geddes 5-10 ... J Wyer 2 6005- CHARIE DYER (10) J Dodds 5-10 ... J Wyer

7.20 DUNEDIN INDEPENDENT CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m

1 0801- TAHIAN (20) M Cullen 5-10 ... J Wyer 2 2205- CHARBIE (20) W Fuchs 6-10 ... J Wyer 3 3105- OUT ON A PROMISE (20) D Lunge 6-10 ... J Wyer 4 0407- REALLY USEFUL (20) M Rodhouse 6-10 ... J Wyer 5 0203- ROBINS (20) M Rodhouse 6-10 ... J Wyer 6 0203- CORDIAL (22) M Rodhouse 6-10 ... J Wyer 7 0303- TAWAFI (22) CCM M Hammond 6-10 ... B Harding 8 3304- VINTAGE TATTINGER (24) C J Gidde 6-10 ... A Dobbin -5 declared -

BETTING: 6-2 Tarzan, 7-2 Out On A Promise, 8-1 Cordial, 9-1 Wyer, 10-1 Really Useful, 11-1 Robins, 12-1 Cordial, 13-1 Tawafi, 14-1 Vintage Tattinger.

MINIMUM weight: 10st. True handicap weights: Shining Example 126, Hallelujah Falls 126, Rocket Run 126, Tarzan 126, Now Young Man 126, Shining Example 126, Heart Of Andante 126, FAVOURITES: Out 130-22 (38%). R Johnson 5-10 (50%).

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J Carroll 10-17 (51%). K Cheshire 21-31 (24%). J Weaver 15-18 (15%).

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Bergkamp may miss first game

By Ian Davies

THE Netherlands coach, Guus Hiddink, has admitted that Dennis Bergkamp may not be fit in time for his side's opening World Cup game against Belgium a week on Saturday.

Bergkamp has been out with a hamstring injury since the middle of May, but Hiddink had been hoping the Arsenal striker would be ready to start the Group E match at the Stade de France. "Time is running out for Dennis," admitted Hiddink as his side prepared for their final warm-up match against Nigeria today.

Hiddink will want to test the fitness of PSV Eindhoven's central midfielder Wim Jonk in that game. Jonk has been suffering with a groin injury and, if he is not fit, Hiddink seems certain to favour the right-footed Aron Winter as a partner for Phillip Cocu instead of the left-footed Edgar Davids.

The German trainer Bert Vogts is to watch captain Jürgen Klinsmann's performance closely in their final World Cup warm-up match against Luxembourg at Mannheim today. He said: "I want to see Jürgen play for 90 minutes, now that he's fit again and played for 20 minutes against Columbia."

The German side go into the game in high spirits, following their convincing 3-1 win against Columbia last weekend. The game against Luxembourg, who have not qualified for the World Cup finals, would be a "nice

run-in for France", added Vogts, who will also be keenly monitoring Bayern Munich's captain Thomas Helmer in training. Vogts said he did not want to risk another injury to Helmer, who has only just returned after a thigh injury.

Vogts said: "I got the green light from the team doctor to play Thomas for one half. He is a very important player, with influence and standing, and I think he is a crucial player for our team." He added he would use the opportunity to try out other players, including wing-back Joerg Heinitz, who was appointed in a recent friendly against Finland.

The Brazilian striker Romario returned home on Wednesday after being dropped from the Brazilian World Cup squad because of an injured right calf. "I went to France full of happiness and surrounded by friends," Romario said shortly after arriving at Rio de Janeiro's international airport. "I return alone and full of sadness. My dream of helping Brazil win its fifth World Cup was shattered. There was a lack of patience. I know how my body functions and I know I would have the physical conditions to play."

Romario said he will have recovered in 15 days and expects to resume playing for Rio's Flamengo. Some fans cried when they saw Romario. Others shouted invective against Zico, the team's coordinator whom they said was responsible for Romario's exclusion.

Baggio set to join Ronaldo at Inter

ITALIAN striker Roberto Baggio will almost definitely join Internazionale for the next Serie A season, a club spokesman said yesterday.

The 31-year-old striker has yet to sign a contract, and the deal is not yet official but it could come as early as today, said the spokesman. Baggio earned a place on Italy's World Cup squad with a late surge for Bologna. He finished the season with 22 goals, fourth-best in the league.

At Inter, he would be paired with the Brazilian Ronaldo, who joined the club last summer and helped them win the Uefa Cup and finish second in the league. Baggio is likely to sign a contract for two or three years with Inter, the spokesman said.

The Argentinian striker Gabriel Batistuta appeared assured of a place in his country's World Cup team, despite a history of differences with head coach Daniel Passarella.

As Passarella confirmed the shirt numbers assigned to each player, the apparent starting team included two surprises:

Batistuta, the Fiorentina striker, was given the No 9 shirt. Ariel Ortega, the skilful Valencia midfielder, received the No 10 shirt which Diego Maradona wore in the last four World Cups.

The South Korean striker Hwang Sun-hong could miss the World Cup after injuring his knee in yesterday's 1-1 draw against China. The experienced 29-year-old Pohang Steelers forward was stretchered off the pitch and taken to hospital after being hurt in a tackle 14 minutes into the warm-up game.

"Hwang has problems with his knee," South Korean coach Cha Bum-Kun said. "He is a very important player to me but we must wait and see what his condition is."

"We had trouble in attack in his absence today," Bum-Kun added. "The Chinese were playing rough, and our players stood back a bit to avoid injuries."



Bryan Robson scores the fastest goal in World Cup history - 27 seconds - as England get off to the perfect start in the 1982 finals with a 3-1 win against France. Photograph: AP

A flying start but a frustrating finish

In 1982 England played in their first World Cup for 12 years but their return to the top ended in disappointment. Ken Jones reports



TOWARDS the end of Sir Alf Ramsey's momentous reign, Brian Clough declared that no sympathy could be held out for the England manager if he was incapable of producing a consistently successful team from a pool of more than 2,000 professional players at work in the Football League.

It was a typically glib and, probably, mischievous notion which ignored the fact that the League supplied men to national teams of the four home countries as well as the Republic of Ireland. An bow in the Rothman Football Yearbook was enough to expose Clough's assertion.

Concentrating for obvious reasons on the First Division, you first had to rule out the Scots, the Welsh, the Irish - from both sides of the border - and the players from outside these islands who had started to infiltrate the game in England.

Further culling eliminated former internationals who had wanted, failed candidates and, the largest group, those clearly not up to standard. By my reckoning, 35 genuine contenders survived. Three more than I made it," Ramsey said.

Ramsey's figure of 33 would come to haunt his successor, Don Revie. Appointed the England manager (Joe Mercer held the fort briefly) in June 1974 after the feted hero of 1966, he was dumped for failing to qualify for that summer's World Cup finals. Revie's biggest mistake was to overlook the difficulty implicit in Ramsey's assessment. Barely a year after taking the job, Revie's optimism had already given way to serious misgivings. England had

done well enough on the field - four wins in five matches, including three that carried qualifying points for the 1976 European Championship - but with ability to handle international football were not coming forward. "Les warned me about it when I asked him to join me," Revie said, "but I thought he was being unnecessarily pessimistic. As a club manager you sometimes lose sight of the wider picture. But it wasn't long before I knew that we weren't good enough."

When England were nudged out of a place in the European Championship finals, Revie knew how difficult it would be to qualify for the 1978 World Cup in Argentina, especially when they were drawn in a qualifying group with Italy. A 2-0 loss in Rome in November 1976 filled Revie with gloom. "We weren't in the same league," he confided.

By the summer of 1977, England's absence from the World Cup finals looked like running to at least 12 years. Missing from England's match in Brazil, the first of three on a summer tour, Revie returned from clandestine negotiations to seek an assurance from the FA that Bobby Robson had not been lined up as his replacement. When this was not forth-

coming, Revie took a decision that scandalised English football and branded him as a traitor. He walked out.

In an effort to restore dignity, the FA turned to Roy Greenwood, who should have been appointed in the first place. One of English football's best brains, Greenwood, by then in late middle-age, was approaching the end of his career at West Ham, unhappy with the role of consultant.

A 2-0 defeat of Italy at Wembley, when their only chance of reaching Argentina was victory by six or seven goals, meant that England would miss another World Cup.

Three years later England found themselves up against it again following a defeat in Switzerland. They were rescued by a 3-1 victory against Hungary in Budapest, where Trevor Brooking, one of Greenwood's students at West Ham, scored a glorious goal which meant that England went through to the 1982 finals.

Greenwood felt that he had a chance. He had the respect of senior players in the squad and a number of talented youngsters, including the Arsenal left-back, Kenny Sansom, and Manchester United's dynamic midfielder, Bryan Robson.

Sansom first came to Greenwood's attention in an outstanding Crystal Palace youth team and he was thrilled to be called on for the finals in Spain. "Every footballer who gets to a World Cup for the first time says that it's the stuff of dreams, but you have to be there to know how thrilling it is," Sansom said recently. "It gives you such a buzz. All the best players are

there, men you don't normally come up against, posing different problems from League matches. It's like nothing else a player ever comes across."

England started well, defeating France 3-1 in Bilbao, their first goal coming from Bryan Robson after less than 30 seconds - "From a throw-in that I was supposed to take," Sansom said. "Instead, Steve Coppell picked up the ball and when Terry Butcher flicked it on there was Robbo, bingo, a goal. Afterwards we learned what we had already guessed, that it was the quickest in the history of the World Cup."

England topped their group with further victories over Czechoslovakia and Kuwait, but Brooking and Kevin Keegan were still missing because of niggling injuries. "It seemed to be taking a long time for them to get over them and things didn't look good when Kevin flew to Germany for treatment," Sansom added.

A 0-0 draw with West Germany in Madrid meant that England needed to beat Spain, while scoring at least two goals, to qualify for the semi-finals. With 27 minutes left the game was goalless and Greenwood sent on Brooking and Keegan as substitutes. Immediately, Brooking should have scored but shot straight at the Spanish goalkeeper. Shortly afterwards, Keegan headed wide. "No excuses, I should have scored," Keegan said. England were out and Greenwood was on his way into retirement.

"We just couldn't score," Sansom said. "If only Gary Lineker had come along a bit sooner."

Hartson stalls on new deal

AS West Ham's Welsh striker John Hartson flew into Tunisia last night to face England's first World Cup rivals with his country, his club future looked less certain.

Hartson - who is believed to want £20,000 a week to sign a new deal - has been stalled over signing a three-year extension to his current contract, and last week was the subject of a bid from Blackburn.

West Ham put a £10m price tag on their top scorer - before saying he was not for sale and Blackburn Rovers manager Roy Hodgson splashed out £7.5m on Southampton's Kevin Davies instead. Hartson has been in brilliant form for the Ham-

mers and scored the second goal in Wales' 3-0 win in Malta on Wednesday.

Leeds and Aston Villa are anxiously awaiting a decision from Alan Thompson after holding talks with the Bolton midfielder. The two clubs are in a straight fight for the 24-year-old, with Leeds chairman Peter Ridsdale and Aston Villa supremo Doug Ellis both prepared to spend £4m to secure his services.

Coventry are hoping to quickly complete the £700,000 signing of Jean Guy Wallerme from French champions Lens while newly-promoted Bristol City have signed Fulham striker Tony Thorpe for £1m.

Joseph Blatter, the Fifa president, has emphasised his commitment to award the 2006 World Cup to an African country as he hit the campaign trail in battle-torn Liberia.

Blatter, who met with local football officials and Liberian star George Weah, also promised to increase funding to sport programmes in this West African country which in 1996 emerged from seven years of civil war.

Celtic yesterday dismissed their assistant head coach Murdoch MacLeod, who was Wim Janse's No 2. In a short statement, the Parkhead side announced that MacLeod had his contract terminated.

Brighton close to securing temporary home

BRIGHTON AND HOVE Albion have taken another step towards playing at Withdean Stadium next season after two more Council committees gave them permission to become the new tenants of the athletics ground.

Earlier this week planners voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Third Division side's proposals to use the stadium as a temporary home, and a final decision will be made at a meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee a week today.

This is subject to the Government's decision whether or not to call a full public inquiry.

The leader of Brighton and Hove Council, Lord Bassam, is pushing for a quick decision to be made and doubts if the government will intervene.

Plymouth Argyle have been fined £6,000 and warned to their future conduct by the Football Association after admitting operating a no-win lottery. The West Country club were found to be in breach of the FA's mis-

conduct rule by a disciplinary commission in London.

An FA spokesman said: "Plymouth admitted they were guilty of operating a no-win policy on their Cash-Line Lottery on six occasions." The club were also ordered to pay £5,000 costs.

Neville Southall has applied for the vacant manager's job at Bury, the club where he began his illustrious career. Southall left Gigg Lane in 1980 to join Everton where he went on to make over 700 appearances.

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